

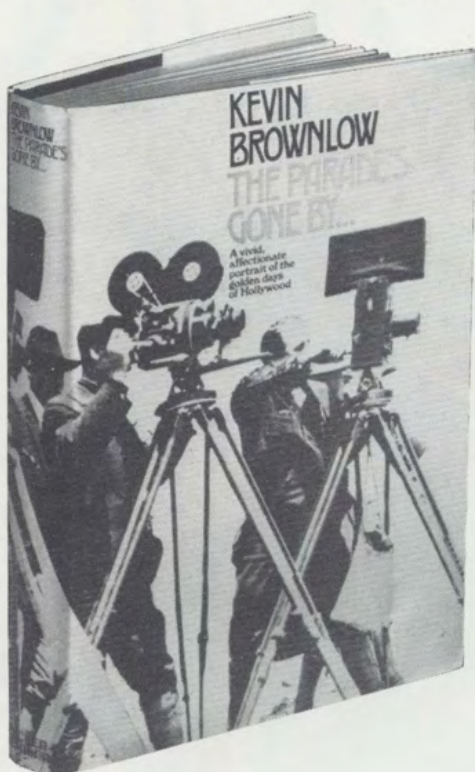
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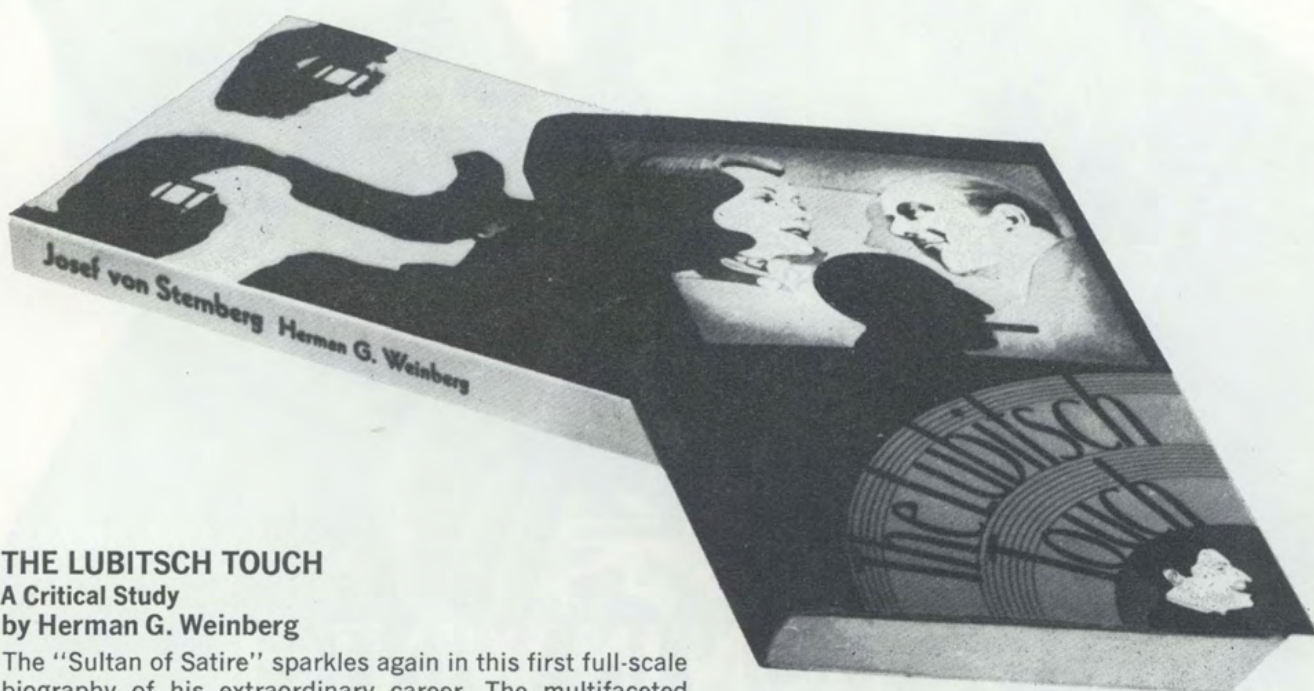
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THE INTERNATIONAL FILM QUARTERLY

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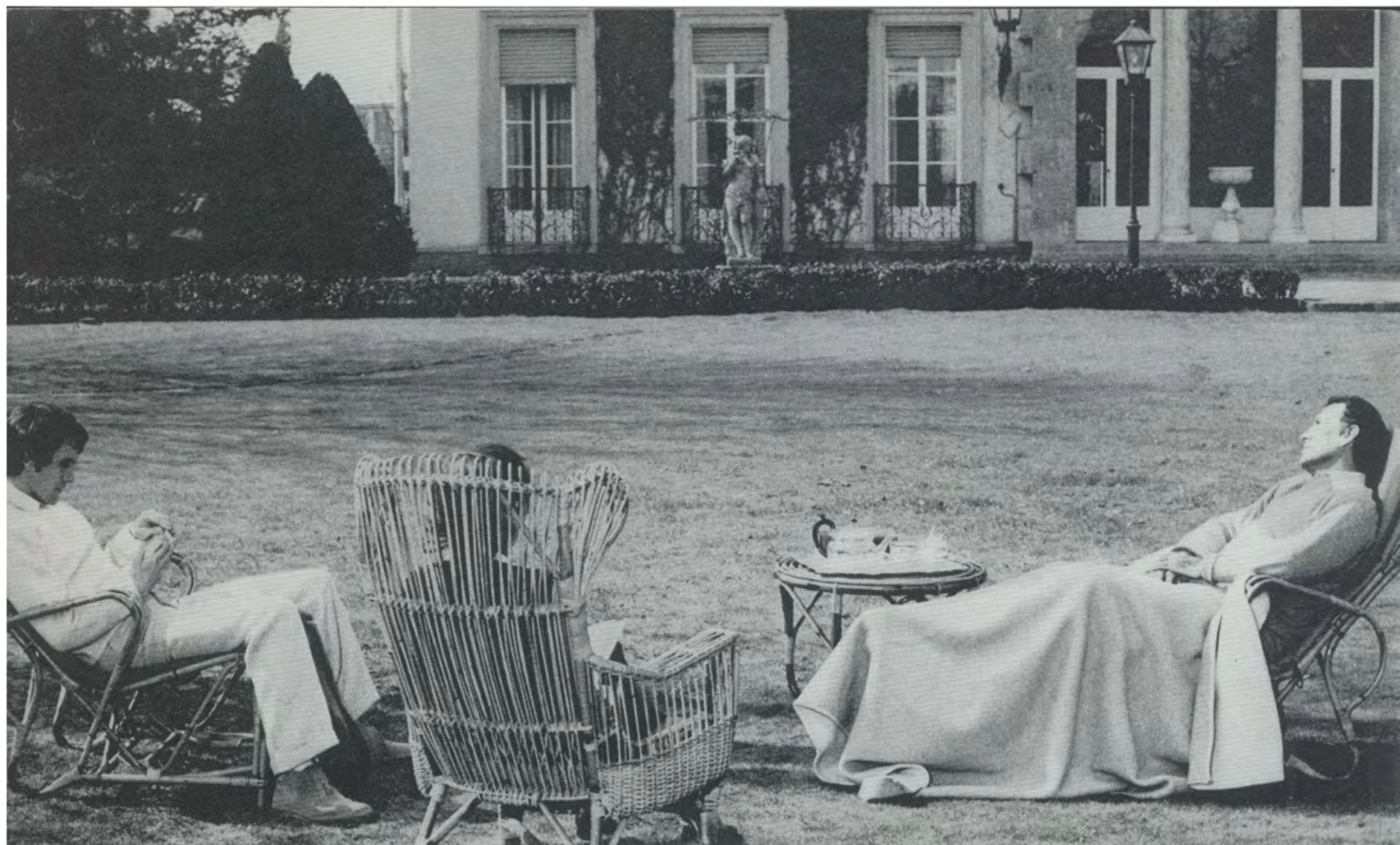
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Pier-Paolo Pasolini/**Contestatore**/Marc Gervais



HOW MANY PEOPLE, especially among the Anglo-Saxons (as General de Gaulle cherishingly refers to English-speaking folk the world over), realise that Pier-Paolo Pasolini has at last won the right to be numbered among the very greatest film directors at work today? Provocative as that indirect affirmation may seem, it is fully justified, I feel. For with *Edipo Re* and *Teorema* Pasolini has achieved two of the most startling film creations of the last few years. The pity of it is that few have seen them or even heard about them; both films have so far had a difficult and precarious existence.

Edipo Re, after wasting away in producer Alfredo Bini's vaults for a year and a half after a semi-disastrous Italian commercial foray—in spite of critical acclaim—finally made it recently to Paris, where it has been received triumphantly by both critics and public. But Paris isn't the whole world, and *Edipo's* chances of being seen elsewhere are at the moment none too promising because, so I'm told, of incredibly intricate (and rather unedifying) complications surrounding its financing. Reduced to the role of helpless bystander, all Pasolini can do is to watch and hope.

Teorema faces difficulties of a more spectacular nature. In a few days (after the completion of this article) Pasolini and Franco Rossellini, *Teorema's* producer, will be tried in Venice on a charge of obscenity. Matters here, however, may be less tragic. For though Pasolini himself could get up to a year in prison, it seems more than likely, on the contrary, that *Teorema* will be freed for Italian distribution—and for its debut in Paris in December and New York in February.*

Of course *Teorema* was in a row from the very start, even before shooting began and again at the Venice Festival, where Pasolini was a leader in the contestation. Since then, what with the trial and such, the controversy has only increased, especially in Italy, where it has polarised opposition to the Christian Democrat Party and caused a sharp division of opinion (yet another) within Catholic circles. For *Teorema* was awarded the OCIC ('International Catholic Jury') prize—that brought a rash of headlines—only to be attacked subsequently by the Vatican's *Osservatore Romano*, and then by the Italian episcopate. The debate is far from over, having spread to France and showing signs of springing to life elsewhere.

All of this, however, is part of the usual pattern for Pasolini, a storm centre ever since he achieved prominence. And the storm goes on raging precisely because of the varied nature of his productivity. At forty-six, Pasolini is already a noted novelist and poet, and a ranking critic and film theorist. His ideas about film language, and about film prose and poetry, and his critiques of certain directors such as Antonioni, are among the most challenging in the field. Recently he also became a working journalist-at-large for Italy's *Life-like Tempo*. Above all Pasolini is a political animal, an involved, dedicated disciple of Marx, ready to champion any cause he feels is justified. Contestation, Vietnam, the race problem—you name it, Pasolini will fight (in his way) to free the world of what he calls its bourgeois domination.

In Italy, where ideology is strong and clear—and where 'dialogue' tends to be a word reserved for the dictionary rather than something people engage in—the result is inevitable: Pasolini's name is anathema, or nearly so, in certain specific political and ecclesiastical circles. But it isn't quite that simple, by any means. Indeed, understanding Pasolini is anything but simple, for he is one of the most complex and paradoxical figures prominent today. Much has been written, for example, about the Marxist who in 1964 set out to film a 'real' life of Christ, once and for all demythologising the divinity aspects, and who created instead his most brilliant film up to that time, *The Gospel According to Saint Matthew*, acknowledged even by champions of Church orthodoxy as the

finest film on Christ yet attempted. Pasolini disconcerted his Marxist comrades that time, needless to say; and yet he is a disciple of Marx (and a disciple of Freud, too). And this man, who in the past has claimed he is an atheist, at the same time feels that the *sacred* is the central fact of existence (and the central preoccupation of all his works). A question of defining the terms? Or moments in his own dialectical process?

* * *

In any case, Pasolini is a very disconcerting figure, both to his friends and to his foes. To many he is a living source of contradiction and confusion. To others (including myself), he is a sort of central reflector of the contemporary maelstrom, a desperately honest and sincere artist-intellectual searching after 'reality', influenced by any number of conflicting forces; but pointing the way too, perhaps, to an over-all conciliation of scientific materialism with the spiritual view of life, of Marxism with Christianity. Paradox again, surely, for a man who, anything but the spirit of conciliation himself, upsets *all* systems by his contestation.

All of which may sound far removed from film criticism. But it forms part of the background that is essential, I feel, to any thorough understanding of Pasolini's cinema. For Pasolini uses the cinema as an instrument to further his own kind of search. Jean-Luc Godard (aptly quoted by Richard Roud) has pointed out that "novelists and film-makers are condemned to an analysis of the world, of the real; painters and musicians aren't." This particular vocation of the cinema Pasolini subscribes to in a manner far more literal than Godard, or above all such aesthetics-obsessed artists as Antonioni and Resnais. For Pasolini, the cinema *must* interpret contemporary reality, it must be involved with the central issues (and that means the political/ideological ones) of the times. But more than that, it must thrust toward the deepest levels of human reality, and attempt to express these as well.

This particular aesthetic, as has often been pointed out, is dangerous in art. An overt preoccupation with ideology, ideas, convictions and so on, can lead to artistic expression whose full *artistic* dimensions remain unrealised. In other words, when it's more a question of intellectual statement than of poetic inspiration, or when a film is being used to carry an idea instead of being the very incarnation of that idea. Indeed, I've felt that Pasolini at times (e.g. *Uccellacci e Uccellini*, in 1965) has given the impression of an artist in search of the right form for his themes.

Not so, however, with *Edipo Re* and *Teorema*. Here are works of art that, formally speaking, seem perfectly adequate to express Pasolini's ideology, his ideas and convictions; but only the richer for this, they are essentially *poetic* works, breathing a personal world of beauty, terror, obsession, intense experience. Above all, they are art objects, with a life and consistency all their own.

Edipo Re

In *Edipo Re*, of course, Pasolini was dealing with a myth embodying some of the most profound insights yet arrived at by man, a parable if ever there was one on the human condition—and as such ready-made, one might say, for expressing Pasolini's own concerns and insights, the big metaphysical ones. Not that he could count on that particular world view and sensibility which have endowed Greek tragedy with its unique quality. In an age, if one may use a simplified example, when even the mythic movie cowboy has lost his towering proportions, Pasolini could scarcely hope to represent the glorious, heroic aspects of the Sophoclean protagonist in his struggle with the gods.

Pasolini's option is radical: he completely sacrifices the play's classical verbal poetry and its choric dance for more realistic speech and action patterns. Whatever poetry aspired to will have to be achieved by other means. But the pruning operation goes further. Sophocles had mesmerised his

*This forecast has since proved correct. At the Venice court hearing both Pasolini and his producer were acquitted, the court ruling that "the film could not be considered obscene because of its artistic value."



"EDIPO RE".

audiences, had compelled their 'willing suspension of disbelief' by structuring his dramatic poem within a plot which for expertise and suspense values even Hitchcock aficionados have to admit has never been surpassed. This too is sacrificed, as Pasolini literally undoes the play. Adding a modern prologue and ending with a present-day epilogue, he sets about unravelling the intricate Sophoclean plot, stretching it out in simple chronological order—a rather daring procedure, and an amazing reversal, really: it is the ancients, we are told, who revered chronology, and the moderns who delight in doing Resnais-things with time. Pasolini, however, begins with Oedipus' birth and goes through the various events one by one until Oedipus' final blind wandering in exile, playing out explicitly on the screen events which in the play are merely related. The abandonment of the infant, his rescue, his childhood in Corinth, his journey to Delphi, the Oracle's prophecy, his flight to Thebes, the murder of Laius and his attendants, the destruction of the Sphinx, the marriage to Jocasta, the intensity of their love, the ravages of the plague—all of it is there, re-enacted before us on the screen.

* * *

The film is simply the series of these events, one following upon the other, unprepared, unexploited for their story values, in many ways even unexplained, but merely allowed to explode before us in their beauty, their mystery, their terror. And this is the magic of Pasolini's cinema, a cinema of frontal assault. We are not asked to believe a story, we are simply buffeted by emotion. But not only by emotion, for in a Pasolini film ideas and reactions are clearly spelled out for us, and there's always question of a certain aesthetic and intellectual distance. Our reaction is one of enthrallment, but of insight as well. Intellect and emotions are appealed to directly and personally, and we feel involved at the most profound level.

For Pasolini structures his film so as to capture man in those moments and situations completely beyond pretence and convention. *Edipo Re* is the Sophoclean tragedy stripped down

to the elemental and the primitive.* It is man and the desert and the scorching sun, man naked before his own fear and bewilderment, his lust, his meanness, his strength, his need, his love and compassion, man working out his own destiny, a free being, and yet very much at the mercy of a higher destiny, of mysterious powers beyond his control.

With a whirling, prowling camera that blinks at the sun and gasps and breathes almost in unison with Oedipus, Pasolini (true to his principles *re* the poetic cinema) invests his film with a wild, tormented, baroque quality. Opting for certain realistic elements—no Cinecittà ersatz marble here, as he situates the tragedy 'openly' somewhere in Morocco: the rocks, the desert sand, the mountains, the sun, the primitive walled cities and above all the Arabic faces of the extras are rich in that '*réalité ontologique*' Bazin prized so much in the cinema—Pasolini allows each moment all the time required to achieve full poetic and dramatic impact. No fancy jump cuts à la Godard, not that kind of distanciation. The realism is only a launching site, as it were, for Pasolini's soaring poetic assault. It's not only the dazzling camerawork, however, or the almost-hysterical violence of the action, intensified by the almost-hysterical acting style, with all its screaming, gasping and physical straining. It is rather the whole film that throbs with a passion, a terror, a loveliness. Close-ups of tormented or enigmatic faces, a prey to some dreadful knowledge or premonition; the long-shots of the desert and the sky and the walled cities; the browns, greys and greens of the countryside, and the lush reds and blues of the costumes; the haunting Arabic music, the primitive dances and liturgy—Pasolini orchestrates it all with one end in view, to communicate with intensity, and in the poetic mode, the basic human psyche.

*Interestingly enough, it is only in those parts of the film which re-enact scenes actually dramatised in the play that Pasolini seems to lose his sureness of touch, where freshness and intensity are threatened by an awkward theatricality.

The measure of his success is that a modern audience really does feel the horror, for example, of the murder of Laius and his attendants, and the tragedy of the desperately passionate but doomed Jocasta marriage. And I feel we are deeply troubled by the spectacle of a bewildered and frightened Oedipus at a cross-roads, trying to run away from the inevitability of the prophecy (and of his fate), turning round and round like a child, his hands over his eyes, forcing chance to indicate what path he must choose—and of course heading back to his origins and his ultimate destiny. Scene after scene works at this level (which is really many levels); and Pasolini pulls out all the stops, emotional and otherwise, to convey the intensity of the elemental confrontation.

* * *

Paradoxically enough, it is in this search for the primitive and the elemental that Pasolini courts the modern sensibility. The modern reflectors, the contemporary currents that have shaped his thinking, his sensibility, are ever present. The ambivalence of Oedipus (and of Pasolini) in the way they relate to the various events—horror, yet fascination, repulsion hand in hand with attraction—reflect the complexity of experience we are so aware of. Pasolini, too, makes sure that the film will be situated unmistakably in a Freudian context from the prologue on. And one could interpret much of the film, especially its epilogue, along the Marxist lines one expects in Pasolini's cinema. But it is in that search for the authentic experience, for brute reality, that the work is thoroughly contemporary in spirit. Contemporary, yes, but much more, as we have seen. For the very thrust of the film, in its quest for the metaphysical, situates it in a context beyond that of any particular sensibility or philosophy. In *Edipo Re*, Pasolini has created a truly personal work informed by his own sensibility, his convictions, his ambivalent attitudes, his doubts. But more, the film is universal man's cry of pain and bewilderment before the mystery of life.

Masterpiece? Probably not, for *Edipo Re* is anything but unflawed as a work of art. Some of the scenes, as I have indicated, verge on the falsely theatrical; and the strain in styles between the realistic and the baroque has bothered a number of critics. Now and again one feels that in his search for the visually poetic, Pasolini has allowed the picturesque and the liturgical to linger overlong. And it is quite possible that the high-pitched ranting and screaming, the violence and the blood-bath, ultimately work against the film. But this is one film, it seems to me, that should be judged by the magnitude of its achieved ambitions rather than on more or less incidental failures. And to the extent that it succeeds in bringing the cinema into a direct confrontation with the mystery of life, it proves a not unworthy successor to Sophocles' monumental achievement. Certainly it is the finest filmic rendition of a classical Greek subject yet attempted.

Teorema

For Pasolini, however, the pursuit of the poetic cinema did not end with *Edipo Re*. In his next film, *Teorema*, he launches out again with a parable fraught with implications about the human condition, but this time the parable is his own, an adaptation of his recently published novel. An intensely personal and unusual film, *Teorema* stands as Pasolini's most accomplished work to date. And with it, he emerges as a creative artist who has achieved the mastery of form and technique permitting the fully integrated artistic expression of his vision and of his sensibility.

The contrasts with *Edipo Re* are interesting. Where *Edipo Re* was a series of events exploding in sound and fury (as they say), stretched out along a man's journey to his destiny, *Teorema* contains its passion, its torment and anguish, behind a façade of fashionable calm and elegance: a cool, gem-like creation, clear, mathematical, precise. The pace is slow and controlled, the camera in repose as it captures elegantly framed images of crystalline beauty. Once again, to be sure, we are pulled in by the film's intense beauty and passion. But true to his aesthetic, Pasolini achieves a certain distantiation



"EDIPO RE": FRANCO CITTI AS OEDIPUS.

by making his presence overwhelmingly felt as he moves his characters in preordained fashion, figures in some strange liturgy, working out his intellectualised pattern in a structure whose outline is deliberately open, visible. The cinema *qua* geometric theorem, indeed. But a cinema of hot ice, where every glance reveals a devouring human need.

* * *

Well and good. But for all its aesthetic quality, *Teorema* risks being one of those films doomed to be swallowed up in the controversy it engenders. It has become the focal point of larger issues and considerations beyond the aesthetic, issues very difficult to avoid; and as such, one feels obliged to touch upon them.

There is that accusation of obscenity, for example. For those who haven't yet heard about the plot that raised eyebrows, Venetian and otherwise: a young man spends a few days with a wealthy industrialist's family. Promptly, madly, irrevocably, the maid, the daughter, the son, then Mama and finally Papa fall in love with him. After gratifying to some extent their sexual yearnings, the young man is mysteriously summoned away, leaving behind him five people alienated from their 'bourgeois' life, and utterly unable to cope with the terrible forces now unleashed within themselves. Each one seeks an answer, or attempts to escape: in madness, in protest-art, or in some kind of religious experience. This story, coupled with a pervasive heterosexual/homosexual climate, along with the frequency of the sexual encounters, a bit of skin, and certain ideological/theological implications, unleashed a veritable scandal, in certain Italian circles especially. Hence the Italian judiciary's initial accusation of obscenity, and the bewilderment (among some Catholics and others) over the film being awarded the OCIC prize. A Catholic prize for such a film?

The question of obscenity, in this particular Pasolini context, is worth going into. Is the film really obscene, even when judged from the strictly moralistic point of view? Without burdening oneself with the almost insuperable task of defining just what obscenity is . . . Pasolini himself has pointed out something essential: by the discretion and restraint exercised in his handling of the sexual encounters, and by their systematic reduction to the level of a certain *disincarnation*, these encounters take on the quality of symbols, part of a poetic language—and anything but peep-show material.

It has become something of a cliché for sociologists, psychologists, clergymen or, for that matter, any non-professional who has the ability to reflect even a little bit, to note that our contemporary culture is saturated to the point of sickness with a certain kind of sex, sex *qua* commodity. It is to

Pasolini's credit, it seems to me, that he refuses to play the pandering game, that he goes well beyond the superficial and dehumanised aspects of sex. Through a contemplation of the most mysterious and suffering aspects of sexual attraction and encounter, and their poetic transposition to the level of symbol, he leads his audience into a confrontation with the human spirit in its deepest and most mysterious exigencies. The sexuality permeating his film is anything but an end in itself; it constitutes a call to something else. Needless to add that we are light years away from that drab, pathetic sex-and-skin semi-pornography that has, in one way or another, always given great areas of the commercial cinema a certain well-deserved reputation.

One wonders why all the controversy. Is it perhaps because of Pasolini's political ideology and his disconcerting all-round pattern of activity? Or is it that a genuine work of art, at least that kind of art which attempts to 'reflect reality', is of its very nature some sort of threat to a mentality often associated with established authority—a mentality that, in order to preserve a status quo, opts for the simplified view? When the basic context of a particular world view is not put in question, many things (in the area of obscenity, for example) can be tolerated, swallowed up within the context. But when the context itself begins to waver on the quicksands of ambiguity, defence mechanisms are triggered, and reactions tend to be immediate, often excessive. And so, *Sexy Prohibitissimo* si, *Teorema* no.

Teorema, to be sure, is shot through with paradox. It has already been noted that the precise, mathematical coolness of the film nevertheless burns with an intensity of emotion. But the paradox goes beyond that: the intellectual clarity and mastery evidenced in the film's structure ultimately open out on an ambiguity that remains, to a great extent, unresolved. All of which may account for the plethora of interpretations; and may also explain why *Teorema* is seen by some as a genuinely religious work, while at the same time becoming a cause of 'grave concern' within certain church milieux.

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But perhaps a closer examination of the film in its thematic implications, and as an expression of 'l'univers pasolinien', would serve to clarify what I mean. *Teorema*, in its very structure, can be seen as an exercise in cutting through the superficialities of life in order to arrive at some fundamental realities. Or, in terms of what happens in the film, the *before* (superficiality) and the *after* (reality), balanced on a certain catalytic experience.

In the first half of the film, Pasolini reconstructs in stunning visual terms a certain world in its ideal state: a beautiful home, lovely grounds; decent, likeable people, the father a successful industrialist, the mother elegantly superb, the two children attending good schools, a maid fortunate to serve in such a home. It is the bourgeois ideal, as Pasolini would put it, with all its comforts and commodities, enhanced by an undeniable elegance and graciousness—and thoroughly cut off from the harsh realities both of the human psyche and of the outside world (by the exploitation of which, Pasolini would add, such a life is made possible).

But comes the central experience of the film, and their carefully protected world begins to fall apart. That experience is a key to the understanding of the whole film, and as such cries for interpretation. Just what are the sexual encounters between the strange young guest and the five protagonists meant to signify? We are mesmerised, to be sure, but we wish to know. By Pasolini's ritualised treatment of them they become, to repeat what I suggested above, symbols in something akin to a liturgy—a liturgy, it seems to me, that can no more be limited to an exclusively sexual interpretation than can, say, the Tristan-Isolde myth.

Is it the intrusion of Eros into human life, or a rehash of sorts of the Ondine fable? One could go on indefinitely in this vein. The overall tone of the film, however, has led many to ferret out directly religious implications, with the young man, for example, as a Christ figure. Pasolini himself agrees in part, but specifies: "This isn't a parable about Christ's coming among men, it isn't Jesus inserted into the modern world. It is

God, the terrible God of creation. It is Jehovah. My way of relating to the sacred has not changed since childhood. The sacred is real, it's the only essential reality, the thing that preoccupies me. All my works are concerned with human beings in their dealings with the sacred, with the presence of the sacred in everyday life—which bourgeois capitalist society does its best to repress, but which always ends up by breaking out anyway."

Pasolini's point is clearly stated, and certainly doesn't do violence to his own film in any way. Indeed, the second half of *Teorema*, liberally sprinkled with biblical references, is even more religious in its implications. But the statement quite obviously makes no attempt to cover all the ground. It doesn't even mention, for example, the deeply enigmatic nature of his film, nor the atmosphere of mystery as his camera follows each of the five characters in their attempts to come to terms with what for them has been a life-shattering breakthrough in awareness and experience. The 'bourgeois life' is now felt as suffocating, artificial, frustrating. Alienated, sick at soul, a prey to all-consuming desires and feelings and needs that have broken loose, they are driven by forces within themselves so powerful as to make everything else seem pale and meaningless.

The new reality drives them far indeed in their desperate search for relief, for some sort of answer. And nowhere does the enigmatic nature of the experience become more evident than in the various solutions or escapes envisaged—religion, art, insanity, death. Because each one of the five 'endings' (one per protagonist) has something in it of the hysterical, and yet something of the sublime; and Pasolini structures each so as to underline a certain ambiguity.

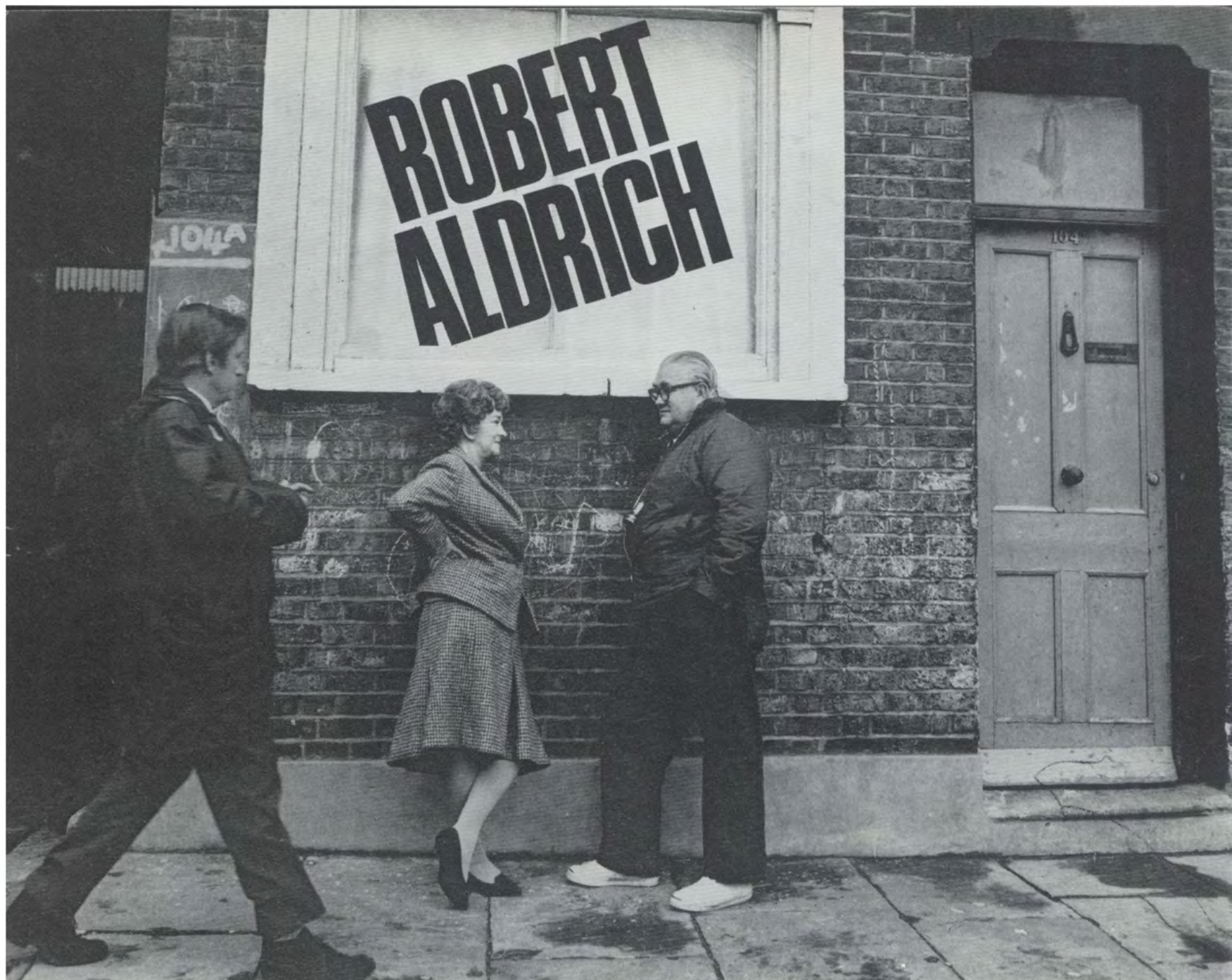
All of which makes *Teorema*, in spite of its clarity and precision, difficult to pin down intellectually, and impossible to reduce to any 'system'. For here is a film that has been explained as the expression of "la difficulté d'être d'un homosexuel," and as a thoroughly Freudian adventure—and yet it opens out on to metaphysical and sociological vistas well beyond the Freudian frame of relevance. It is also seen as a "Marxist condemnation of the spirit-stultifying aspects of bourgeois society," and it is certainly that, too. But it soars into areas which transcend the strictly materialistic horizons of orthodox Marxism. And as for the religious interpretation, well, it can always be pointed out that elements in the film may be seen as a bitter and painful reduction of religion to the level of futility and madness. A religion predicated on anguish and semi-despair, and closely related to hysteria, to the almost complete exclusion of serenity and fulfilment; a religion whose sole symbolic approaches, so some say, are at the level of the sexual; and, finally, a religion based on the rejection of earthly values, rather than on their transformation and completion—such a religion, needless to add, proves disconcerting in terms of contemporary western religious sensibility, and quite unacceptable to those who tend to demand of a film a certain dogmatic orthodoxy whenever it dares approach the religious sphere.

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And so the controversy will doubtless go on, precisely because *Teorema* is a fascinating and compelling work of art, with a power to charm and captivate; but one of those films, too, with a terrible power to challenge. Forcing us into a direct confrontation with the deepest problems of human existence, Pasolini leaves us suspended, as it were, on the ultimate mystery. Using the Freudian and Marxist insights that have played so dominant a role in fashioning our contemporary way of structuring reality, he cuts through the spiritual death man is threatened with by that consumer society whose be-all and end-all is physical commodities. He shows us man bereft of all but the essentials, faced with his ultimate exigencies, his infinite thirst for something else. But just as man in life, when faced with its overpowering mystery, has an open option—he may (as Pasolini sees it) find his ultimate meaning in the religious solution, in the transcendent, or he may withdraw into the anguished conviction of the basic absurdity of everything, or even into madness or despair—so in *Teorema* the openness of the option is respected. Ambivalence, perhaps; but the final word is mystery.



ROBERT ALDRICH



"THE KILLING OF SISTER GEORGE": BERYL REID, ROBERT ALDRICH

Interviewed by Joel Greenberg

THE THALBERG BUILDING, Culver City, California: follow its long plain corridors, climb a couple of flights of prosaic stairs and turn several corners and you will eventually reach an office that sometimes serves as the temporary headquarters of the Aldrich and Associates, Inc. company. An inner room, rather murky and cluttered, its main furnishings a mountainous desk and a number of big black leather chairs, discloses a burly, bespectacled man who looks as if he might have been a formidable college footballer. This is Robert Aldrich, and he was indeed a formidable college footballer. He is now an even more formidable veteran of countless Hollywood in-battles, and creator of a body of films which at their best reflect his own urban-American energy and his preoccupation with the morality and ethics of violence in an amoral, violent world. Over Coca Cola, he talks briskly and often pungently of the vicissitudes of a movie director's career, and after the interview—although it is well past office hours and the building is practically deserted—he will confer long into the evening with a colleague on the preparation of their new film. Movie-making, for Robert Aldrich, is clearly a twenty-four-hour a day activity.

How did you enter movies?

I was about to leave the University of Virginia in 1941 when I approached an uncle who had some movie interests in California. He gave me a production job for six weeks at \$25 per week saying, "I never want to see you again." My job was that of production clerk, a position that has since been done away with. It was the lowest form of human life here, the guy below the book-keeper and below the tea boy. They were finally unionised about 1942 or 1943 and became third or fourth assistants.

I made the jump from fourth to first assistant director rather hurriedly thanks to World War II. I was thrown out of the Air Corps after a day and a half because of some old football injuries, and owing to the wartime shortage of young manpower I quickly rose from first assistant to production manager.

What were some of the pictures you worked on at this period?

I was very lucky in my assignments. I worked with Lewis Milestone on about four or five pictures when he was just about at the peak of his career—although he mightn't consider it the peak. I worked with Chaplin, with Joseph Losey and Bill Wellman, and also with some terribly bad directors whom there's no point in naming—although you learn just as much from the bad ones as you do from the good ones, strangely.

What were Enterprise Studios like to work for?

Enterprise embodied a really brilliant idea of a communal way to make films. It was a brand new departure, the first time I can remember that independent film-makers had all the money they needed. But we wasted—that's presumptuous—the company wasted an awful lot of money, energy and effort on bad material, on improperly developed material, because its story selection and picture execution were not what they should have been.

There's an ethnic saying here: "A fish stinks from the head." Well, there was no head of that studio. There were a lot of very talented, experienced, intelligent people among its various branches, but there was no knowledgeable guy to run the shop.

But for about two or three years before it went down the drain I would guess that it had a better esprit de corps, and more interest and excitement going for it among its employees, from the labourer to the star, than any place in Hollywood. Personal relationships between the employees and management were extraordinary, and they paid the top dollar to all technicians. Thus they got the best technicians from every major studio in town.

Did Enterprise have an ethic, an orientation towards stories with social significance?

I think that happened, but it would be unfair to say that was its 'aim'. As the Irish say, this was just before the 'troubles', and the talented people in that period—there were exceptions, of course—tended to be more liberal than the untalented people, and because they were more liberal they got caught up in social processes that had political manifestations which later proved to be economically difficult to live with. In its search for talented and interesting people Enterprise hired a great many followers of that persuasion, and its pictures consequently began to acquire more and more social content.

Which of the outstanding pictures at Enterprise did you work on?

I don't think there were any 'outstanding' pictures. The studio's main problem was that it had one hit and about nine disasters. The hit was *Body and Soul*, which cost a million dollars more than it should have cost because its director, Robert Rossen, was given his head. Abraham Polonsky, although he'd written a marvellous script, really interfered too much. Bob Roberts, who was a dear and good friend, never really pretended to be a producer, and as I said there was nobody at the head of the studio to pull us all up short.

What was your contribution to FORCE OF EVIL?

On that I was production manager and assistant director. Polonsky, who wrote and directed it, is a terribly talented and gifted man. Blacklisted during what we laughingly refer to as the 'dark days'—during which his work was to be found on

television under a considerable variety of different names—he is now back in town and has done work at Universal.

You're led to believe that most of the formerly blacklisted people are back. It's not quite true. The rehabilitation process varies in direct proportion to their talent or their need. If they were marginal, or if they were sporadic in their output, you just find that they're not working.

How did you come to direct your first feature, THE BIG LEAGUER?

At M-G-M they'd formed a unit jokingly called 'the sons of the pioneers' in which sons of producers who had worked with Louis B. Mayer were producing tiny little features. Dore Schary, who didn't have a very outstanding record here, was nevertheless a pretty wise fellow, and he recognised—in his capacity as studio production head—that with fellows like that as producers you had to have directors who knew what they were doing. Herbie Baker, who wrote the screenplay for *The Big Leaguer*, a baseball story, had been with Carl Foreman at Enterprise and suggested my name to Schary. That's how I got to do the film.

Before that I did some filmed television shows in New York, including a lot of the *China Smith* series starring the late Dan Duryea. The photographer was Joe Biroc, and the producer was Bernie Tabakin. It was a fun show—we were knocking these episodes out in two days each—and one day I conceived the idea of making a feature the next time we closed down.

So during ten spare days another fellow and I sat down and wrote a story which became *World for Ransom*. To get enough money to finish the film we took on a couple of commercials, a beer commercial and an Eversharp commercial, and interrupted the picture to shoot them. It was a strange and very enjoyable experience and—except for the end result—a marvellous collaboration. It really had no sets and thanks to Joe Biroc we had reflections in water where there was no water, and all kinds of silly things. I've always looked back on *World for Ransom* with a wistful kind of happy feeling.

How did you become associated with Hecht-Lancaster?

That went back earlier than *World for Ransom*, to the time when they were still kind of sprawling and struggling and had gone to Columbia on a two-picture deal. They needed someone to watch the store because Harold Hecht wasn't too well acquainted with the physical and financial side of picture-making and wanted an experienced production manager. I went there as 'assistant to the producer', which was really just a glorified way of paying me more money so that I could be their production manager.

And your first film for them as director was APACHE?

Yes. They let me do it because they wanted a 'bright young man' they didn't have to pay much money to. A great deal of what I wanted to say about the Red Indians in *Apache* was lost. The original script ended with the hero, Massai (played by Burt Lancaster), going back up to a shack to be shot needlessly in the back by Federal troops. That was the script I'd been given, that was the script I'd approved, and that was the script I'd shot. Two or three days before shooting on the picture was due to finish United Artists prevailed upon Hecht to shoot two endings. I don't know how it is in other countries, but in this country when you have somebody suggest two endings you know they're going to use the other one. So I refused to shoot the alternative ending and for about two days Burt agreed that the original ending was what this picture was all about.

Then for reasons best known to himself he changed his mind. Now once Burt had changed his mind it made little difference if I refused to direct the other ending because the next day they could have got someone who would. The point was lost because a \$500-a-week director had no hope of prevailing against Hecht-Lancaster and United Artists. With the original ending I think the picture would have been more—'significant' is a pompous word—but I think it would have been more important. You make a picture about one thing, the inevitability of Massai's death. His courage is measured against the inevitable. The whole preceding two hours becomes redundant if at the end he can just walk away.

Did you have a more amicable relationship with Burt Lancaster on VERA CRUZ?

Burt is not an easy man to get along with, but quite responsive. On *Apache* we had a much better relationship, I think, than either of us anticipated. On *Vera Cruz* it was less amicable. This was because Burt, until he directed *The Kentuckian*, thought he was going to be a director, and when you're directing your first great big picture you don't welcome somebody else thinking he is going to be its director. There were also a few differences of opinion about concepts and about action. Since Burt directed *The Kentuckian* I think he's probably a more valuable actor.

KISS ME DEADLY has become a kind of 'cult' picture, particularly among some European critics. What are your views on it?

I was very proud of the film. I think it represented a whole breakthrough for me. In terms of style, in terms of the way we tried to make it, it provided a marvellous showcase to display my own ideas of movie-making. In that sense it was an enormous 'first' for me. I've never denied that. I think what irritates some people—and I've been misquoted about this so many times—is that they think I have disowned the importance of the film. I haven't. What I have said is that it has an importance juxtaposed against a particular political background, an importance that's not justified if it's juxtaposed against another one that by accident happens to fit. It did have a basic significance in our political framework that we thought rather important in those McCarthy times: that the end did not justify the means. Once you got outside the United States the whole importance of that disappeared, and the French and others read into it all sorts of terribly profound observations. Now the moment you denied that alleged profundity they thought you were discrediting your own work and their opinion of it, which wasn't the case.

To what extent did you use Mickey Spillane's original book?

The book had nothing. We just took the title and threw the rest away. The scriptwriter, I. A. Bezzerides, did a marvellous job, contributing a great deal of inventiveness to the picture. That devilish box, for example—an obvious atom bomb symbol—was mostly his idea. To achieve the ticking and hissing sound that's heard every time the box is opened we used the sound of an airplane exhaust overdubbed with the sound made by human vocal chords when someone breathes out noisily.

At what point did you form your own company, The Associates and Aldrich?

I formed it at the close of *Kiss Me Deadly*, retaining many of the people—film editor Michael Luciano, cameraman Joe Biroc, prop-men, assistants—who had been with me before on most of the television stuff, certainly on *World for Ransom*.

Did THE BIG KNIFE upset people here in Hollywood?

It certainly did. It was a critical success but economically it was, to say the least, a disappointment. I'd love to be able to say that it failed commercially because it was too uncompromising: that would make me out to be a courageous guy. But there were other factors, the chief one being that lay audiences could not accept Jack Palance as a movie star. They didn't associate him with a guy who could or could not decide to take \$5000 per week. We failed to communicate to the mass audience—not to the critics, not to selective audiences—that it was not primarily a monetary problem; it was a problem of internal integrity such as you or I or the guy at the gas station might have. I don't know that this dilemma could have been resolved anyhow. The original play had been done on Broadway with John Garfield, who was dead by the time we came to do the picture. If you'd had an electric, charming guy like Garfield in the lead you would have solved half the problem but I don't think you could ever have solved the other half.

AUTUMN LEAVES seems to have been a very uncharacteristic subject?

I guess self-survival made me do that one. People were getting pretty collective in their criticism of the violence and anger and wrath in my pictures, although these things weren't

intentional, and I thought it was about time I made a soap opera. I was also a great fan of the Butlers—Jean Rouverol and Hugo Butler—and this was her original story. I had always been a Joan Crawford fan too, but we had big problems with her on *Autumn Leaves*. About a week before work on the picture began, Miss Crawford wanted her own writer to come in and rewrite, which I refused to allow her to do. At two a.m. on the morning before we were due to start shooting I received a 'phone call saying she wouldn't be there later that day unless her writer could attend, to which I responded that if her writer showed up we would not shoot.

Looking back, I really think that's the only way you can properly deal with Miss Crawford. The writer didn't show up but she did, and we proceeded. But she didn't talk to me for about four or five days. She took direction, she did what she was supposed to do, but there was no personal communication. Then one day she was doing a scene terribly effectively: I forget which one. I was really touched, and when she looked up after finishing it I tried not to be obvious in wiping away a tear. That broke the ice, and from then on we were good friends for a long long time.

What was your main anti-war argument in ATTACK?

Well, not the usual 'war is hell' thing but the corrupting influence that war can have on the most normal, average human beings, what terrible things it makes them capable of that they wouldn't be capable of otherwise. I'm very proud of the film. I never saw *The Fragile Fox*, the play on which it is based, but I read it and thought that it said through the characters many things that I would like to have said about anti-war attitudes. We had just been through a cycle of markedly unsuccessful preachment pictures in California, and I thought that if you could make this film really honestly and with a good cast, the characters saying what you'd like to say by just playing the parts, it would be a welcome change. It worked that way and, although many people prophesied that it wouldn't make money, it did; the trouble was that it was cross-collateralised against *The Big Knife* so nobody ever saw any of the money.

What were the circumstances of your quitting direction of THE GARMENT JUNGLE?

That was a strange experience. I don't remember another occasion of a guy getting fired for wanting to shoot the picture that he'd been assigned. Usually, if you're fired, it's for wanting to change the script. The film's producer, Harry Kleiner, had written a terribly tough, controversial script and as we started getting into it—it was shaping up as a pretty good picture—they suddenly realised that they had no intention of making that kind of a document; they wanted to make 'boy meets girl in a dress factory'. I was pretty stubborn, and Harry Cohn, the head of Columbia, was pretty stubborn, and they wanted to change the focus, the force, the direction of the picture. I wouldn't do it and Cohn fired me. I've never seen the finished film, although I'm told that about half or two-thirds of it is mine.

I had a great fondness for Cohn. Naturally I think he was wrong in firing me but that's beside the point. I think he ran a marvellous studio. I think that system is better, I think he did it as well as anybody could do it. He wasn't in the money business, he was in the movie business. I had a chance to have a reconciliation with him later—a reconciliation in terms of doing other work—and I didn't go. I've always regretted it.

What went wrong with THE ANGRY HILLS and TEN SECONDS TO HELL?

The Angry Hills is disappointing not because it's not a good picture but because it *could* have been good. It had a potential that was never even remotely realised. *Ten Seconds to Hell*, on the other hand, is a bad picture. Why, I've never been quite sure. Some of it has to do with my writing, some of it has to do with the story, some of it with the fact that United Artists didn't know what kind of picture it was. If it's bad it's bad, but that's as good as you could make it. Thus you feel embarrassed maybe about *Ten Seconds to Hell*, but you feel sad about *The Angry Hills*. No matter if I did *Ten Seconds to Hell* tomorrow I wouldn't know how to make it any better.



Left: Gaby Rogers in 'Kiss Me Deadly' (1955); Jack Palance in 'Attack!' (1956)

Centre: 'Vera Cruz' (1954).

Below: Rossella Falk and Peter Finch in 'The Legend of Lylah Clare' (1968); Victor Buono in 'What Ever Happened to Baby Jane?' (1962); Ida Lupino, Shelley Winters and Palance in 'The Big Knife' (1955).





MARTINE CAROL IN "TEN SECONDS TO HELL".

I'd know how to make *The Angry Hills* better in a thousand ways.

THE LAST SUNSET?

A very unpleasant experience. The whole thing started badly, went on badly, ended up badly. Dalton Trumbo had done a screenplay. This was just towards the end of the McCarthy period and he had yet to be given a screen credit, though Preminger had promised him one for *Exodus*. He quit his concentration on *The Last Sunset* to concentrate on the Preminger picture and by the time he came back to our film it was too late to save it.

Now I think that, all things considered, Trumbo was 2000 per cent right. There was an enormous principle involved here. He was the first writer to break through the blacklist, he was going to force a change in the whole California concept of blacklisted writers. That was certainly much more important than making Kirk Douglas look well, but it didn't solve the problem of making *The Last Sunset* any better. Rock Hudson emerged more creditably from it than anyone. I found him to be terribly hard-working and dedicated and very serious; no nonsense, no "I've got to look good" or "Is this the right side?" If everybody in that picture, from producer to writer to other actors, had approached it with the same dedication it would have been a lot better. That's not my way of saying that Mr. Hudson is Laurence Olivier, but he was certainly much more honestly involved in that venture than anybody else I can think of.

Were Davis and Crawford your initial choices for the two principal parts in WHAT EVER HAPPENED TO BABY JANE?

Yes, right from the beginning. I'd never met Davis. I did write her a letter saying that she might not want to do the picture but she would have to admit it was the best role she'd ever had, and if she didn't feel that way she shouldn't see me. After two weeks she wrote back declaring that it was rather presumptuous of me to say that, but it was certainly a good enough role to warrant discussion.

Was there any ill feeling between the two stars on the set of BABY JANE?

None. I think it's proper to say that they really detested each other, but they behaved absolutely perfectly: no upstaging, not an abrasive word in public. Nor did Miss Davis allow any enmity with Miss Crawford to colour her playing of the scenes in which she was supposed to torment her. People who loved the violence of it read that into it and thought it was inherent, but it wasn't. They both behaved in a wonderfully professional manner.

How did you find Victor Buono?

I'd seen him in an *Untouchables* episode on television playing a large cameo character called Mr. Moon. He was

fabulous. Davis didn't like him at first: she thought he was too grotesque. Victor obviously sensed her attitude, but he never commented and it was never openly displayed. Halfway through the film—we don't really get along, but this is a small instance of the kind of lady she can be when she wants to—she smiled at him and said: "I want you to know that at the beginning of this picture I did everything I could to persuade Bob not to use you and I'd like to apologise because you're just marvellous." And he was.

Is it true that Davis didn't like herself in the part when she first saw it run?

She'd never seen the complete picture before seeing it with me at Cannes, and I don't think she was prepared for the experience of seeing it among lots of people. She, more than I, decided on her Baby Jane make-up, that ugly chalky mask. I'd say it was 80 per cent Davis and 20 per cent Aldrich, whereas on *Hush*, *Hush Sweet Charlotte* it was very close to 50-50, maybe 55 per cent Aldrich and 45 per cent Davis. She did not realise, I think, what the cumulative effect of seeing herself like that would be. About five minutes into the picture I heard this quiet but kind of desperate sobbing beside me and turned to her wondering what the hell was the matter. "I just look awful," she wept. "Do I really look that awful?"

Miss Davis is a strange lady. She has been misled so many times, and placed her confidence so many times in situations and/or people that didn't pay off, that she's naturally terribly hesitant to trust anybody. Once she trusts you, however, she's marvellous.

Were you pleased with her performance in BABY JANE?

I thought she was wonderful. But I also thought—the public won't agree, and certainly the critics won't agree—that the job she did in *Hush*, *Hush Sweet Charlotte*, because it was a much more difficult, narrow-edged part, and took much more talent and time and thought and care, was a better performance than *Baby Jane*, which was such a bravura, all-out Gothic eye-catcher that everybody thought it superior.

What was the origin of HUSH, HUSH SWEET CHARLOTTE?

It came from a three- or four-page original idea by Henry Farrell, author of the *Baby Jane* novel, that I found very exciting. I also wanted to re-team Davis and Crawford. Then Miss Crawford fell ill and was replaced by Olivia de Havilland. And Crawford was sick, seriously sick. If she'd been faking, as some reports then suggested, either the insurance company would never have paid the claim or she would never have been insurable again. Insurance companies here are terribly tough, there's no such thing as a made-up ailment that they pay you off on.

Eventually the insurance company offered us the alternatives of finding a replacement for Miss Crawford or scrapping the picture. As you can well imagine, there were great arguments about whom we should get. A number of ladies were considered, all of whom for a variety of reasons were not acceptable to all parties. There was also a contractual problem in that Davis had star approval. Until then it had been academic because she had approved Crawford, but it now became vitally important.

Obviously the ideal candidates would have been Vivien Leigh and Katharine Hepburn. Now it's not necessary that it should become a matter of public record why Davis didn't want either of those ladies. It is fair to say however that it had nothing to do with their talent. But there are deep-seated personal and historical reasons why she didn't want them. I won't say that Olivia was third choice, but Olivia was the first choice that was acceptable.

What script problems did you have on THE DIRTY DOZEN?

Metro-Goldwyn-Mayer and the producer Kenneth Hyman had bought the property, a novel by E. M. Nathanson, after I had tried to acquire it when it wasn't even in galleys, just a step outline. Then they had about four or five scripts, the last one written by Nunnally Johnson. This would have made a very good, very acceptable 1945 war picture. But I don't think that a 1945 war picture is necessarily a good 1967 war picture. So I brought in Lukas Heller. Metro must have had about \$300,000 tied up in aborted *Dirty Dozen* scripts by then,

and I wanted a whole new concept. Well, despite considerable resistance, we got a whole new concept, and with the exception of Bosley Crowther I think you will discover that most people adored—that's a pretty rich word—were fascinated by the anarchy of the picture's first two-thirds and were excited and/or stimulated and/or entertained by the last third. The first two-thirds were Mr. Heller's contribution towards making it a 1967 picture and not a 1947 picture and the last third was a pretty high-class, well-done war adventure.

How do you go about preparing your films?

I give my art director, William Glasgow, a concept, and he comes back with the drawings. It's very subtle. Sometimes it gets terribly complicated when we use a model, but very rarely; we did use one on *Charlotte* and *The Legend of Lylah Clare*. As I approve or disapprove of his suggestions his ideas snowball and gradually become better and better. Glasgow did a marvellous job on *4 for Texas*, and an even better one on *Charlotte* which doesn't show because it's in black and white. I believe I gave him his first credit as an art director, and we have been associated ever since. He's a very dedicated, quiet kind of fellow, and also very stubborn.

Do you pre-plan your films in detail?

It might seem a silly thing to say, but one pre-plans one's pictures if there's time. What you find is that you run out of time. You can't let other things intrude on rehearsals even though you'll pay for it later. You concentrate on rehearsals at the expense of other things so you often have to do a certain amount of improvising while shooting. Ideally, I'd like to pre-plan my pictures in their entirety, and on some there's time to do that. Hitchcock is said to do it. Milestone did it. I think it's too rigid. We used to have terrible problems with Milestone. He's a marvellous cutter and director, but he would pre-plan and pre-sketch a scene so much that if an actor wanted to depart from it by even one little bit the whole preparation went for nothing.

How do you view the contemporary film-making scenes here and in Europe?

Among contemporary European directors, I love Godard and Chabrol; I think Chabrol is terribly underrated. As for Hollywood—I could be wrong, this is not a nationalistic point of view—but it's my opinion that we have just as many talented directors and actors here as anywhere else in the world. What has happened is that this industry has gone into the money business and not into the film business, and since they are in the money business they tend to look for guarantees and protections and things like that before everything else. Because of the inundation of the more honest, more frank European pictures we were breaking away from that tendency for quite a while, but now that's been offset owing to the enormous revenues that American films can make through being sold to television. All of a sudden there's a fresh upsurge of this conservative, play-it-safe, let's-sell-it-by-the-foot, very average mundane material.

And I don't know the answer to that. We have such staggering labour costs here. I don't say they are unfair but they are high. You can't make a good film without taking time over it. *Morgan* cost no money, but Karel Reisz took 66 days to make *Morgan*. Well, you can't shoot 66 days in this country for under two million dollars.

I don't know how you are going to break through at the idea level. A guy comes to you and says he wants to make a daring, controversial piece of material. Now to make that well, to make it as well as the Europeans make it, he's got to take the same amount of time. But he can't do that because the Americans in charge of handing out the money aren't going to give him the required amount. They might give him—if he's an extremely talented, well-known guy and the ideas aren't too explosive—one-tenth of the money he needs. But one-tenth of the money he needs is not going to buy him one-third of the time he needs, so he can't come over with a good picture. And I don't know the solution.

"APACHE".



POLANSKI



"ROSEMARY'S BABY".

Colin McArthur

OF ALL POLISH film-makers, Roman Polanski is the least Polish. There are three major influences (national variations of influences on all European artists in this century) which shape the sensibilities of Polish artists: the tradition of Polish Romanticism which, because of the nation's history of political dismemberment, finds its most usual expression in intensely patriotic works of art; the Avant-Garde, including Surrealism, which influenced Polish literature and music in the Twenties and the visual arts in the post-Second World War period; and Socialist Realism which, though not unknown in the Thirties, became the official aesthetic with the establishment of the communist regime in 1945. The intermingling of these traditions has produced fruitful tensions in Polish art, for they do not pull in the same direction: Romanticism and the Avant-Garde produce art of great formal richness and emotional extremes, while Socialist Realist art displays the virtues of social concern, formal order and intellectual discipline.

Thus Aleksander Ford, in *The Young Chopin*, while carefully working out the Polish insurrection of 1832 in Marxist-Leninist terms, startles by his sometimes surrealist imagery; Andrzej Wajda, in *A Generation*, compresses his baroque sensibility within the limits of Socialist Realism; and even

Jerzy Skolimowski, on the surface the most avant-garde of Polish film-makers, is nagged in *Barrier* by the recurrent tragedy of his country's history. Only Roman Polanski seems to emerge almost wholly from one tradition, the Avant-Garde, though his Film School diploma film, *When Angels Fall*, is said to have been influenced by Polish Romantic painters of the nineteenth century, and his first feature film, *Knife in the Water*, has often been misread in social terms. It would seem that the date of Polanski's emergence as a film-maker—he made his first short, *A Toothy Smile*, in 1957—is significant. Following the thaw of 1956, he has never had to accommodate his sensibility to even the outward trappings of socialist realism, and the flagellative tradition of Polish romanticism would seem, on the evidence of his work, not to interest him.

Within the carpet-bag term Avant-Garde there are two major influences on Polanski: the Theatre of the Absurd and Surrealism. Before becoming a director he had been part of the film scene for several years as an actor, principally in the films of Andrzej Wajda (*A Generation*, *Lotna*, *Innocent Sorcerers*); and being also on the fringe of Polish theatre and satirical revue, he shared the influence of the Theatre of the Absurd, Samuel Beckett in particular. He has often expressed a wish to film *Waiting for Godot* (Beckett has always refused

permission), and in his short film *Mammals* he has, in a sense, done so. The two figures are reminiscent both of Vladimir and Estragon and Pozzo and Lucky: they alternately berate and coddle each other, evolving ever more extreme devices for winning each other's sympathy, and the fundamentally bleak attitude to human existence is softened by the Beckettian device of broad humour, as though the only response to looking into the abyss were to utter a belly laugh.

The influence of Beckett is heightened by the appearance of Jack MacGowran—one of the foremost interpreters of Beckett—in *Cul de Sac* and *Dance of the Vampires*; but there is a stronger influence apparent in the earlier film, that of another dramatist of the absurd, Harold Pinter. It is there in the presence of Donald Pleasence and, more basically, in the film's plot. Dickie and Albert, the two gangsters who arrive at Donald Pleasence's Holy Island home, are in clear line of succession from Gus and Ben in *The Dumb Waiter* and Goldberg and McCann in *The Birthday Party*, even to the extent of taking orders from an unexplained figure, Katelbach, at the other end of a telephone; a figure who deserts them in their moment of need ("Count me out: you're on your own").

However, Surrealism has been the most formative influence on Polanski, as he himself has said. "I must confess that I was completely formed by surrealism. Ten years ago, and even at the time when I was making my first shorts, I saw everything in the mirror of surrealism."

Since he came to surrealism primarily through painting, in particular through the work of Dali, Matta and Tchelichev, his surrealism is visceral rather than intellectual and he seems not to be aware of surrealist theory and revolutionary implications as set out in the writings of, for example, André Breton. It can be guessed from his work that the main filmic influence on him has been Buñuel. If *Two Men and a Wardrobe* is reminiscent in places of Dali's coastal deserts, it is also indebted, as Wajda has pointed out, to *Los Olvidados*. *Repulsion*, in its presentation of a sexual obsessive and in its recurrent imagery, is the most Buñuelian of films. Indeed, it is explicitly a *homage*.

The image behind the credits is a huge close-up of an eye with the credits moving at random across it. When the credit 'directed by Roman Polanski' comes up, it moves precisely from right to left across the centre of the eyeball, recalling the notorious opening sequence of *Un Chien Andalou* in which an eyeball is sliced by a razor. The first intimations of violence are conveyed by the juxtaposition within the frame of Carol (Catherine Deneuve) washing her legs, and her sister's lover's razor—two familiar Buñuelian images. Examples of surrealist imagery in Polanski's work could be multiplied almost indefinitely: the chicken feathers in *Mammals*, the raw meat in *Repulsion* and *Rosemary's Baby*, the white garden chair in the grave in *Cul de Sac*, plus very general surrealist traits such as his fascination with the sea with all its Freudian overtones.

A melange of influences does not of itself produce an artist, but Polanski has a good claim to be regarded as such primarily through the single-minded power of his vision. There is a strong thematic continuity in his feature films so far released in this country. All examine aspects of sexuality: *Knife in the Water* is a study of sexual rivalry, *Repulsion* of sexual disgust, and *Cul de Sac* of sexual humiliation. *Rosemary's Baby* teases the audience with the possibility that it is a study in sexual hysteria.

* * *

Knife in the Water remains a striking first film, although in retrospect it seems Polanski's least personal work. On his succeeding films he has always acted at least as co-writer, sometimes, as in the case of *Rosemary's Baby*, having sole control of the writing (though leaning very heavily on Ira Levin's novel). On *Knife in the Water* he shared the writing credit with Jerzy Skolimowski and Jakub Goldberg, and on the evidence of *Barrier* and *Walkover*, the characters and situation seem closer to Skolimowski than to Polanski: the older man a successful sports journalist, the younger a poverty-stricken student with a hankering for the good life, and the conflict between the generations that ensues. The characters, situations and imagery which Polanski dredges up from his

psyche have proved to be much more grotesque. *Knife in the Water*, however, shows a great deal of Polanski's strength and not a little of his weakness.

He has said that the quality which interests him most in cinema is 'atmosphere', the defining of a particular mood. This is practically a definition of what he has done so successfully in *Knife in the Water*. He sharpens the mood of potential violence with a striking array of visual and sound imagery: the initial calm of the Baltic haffs, the game the two men play with the younger man's knife, the sudden eruption of sound and movement as the boat is hauled through the reeds, the clatter of metal objects during the cooking scene, the burning of the young man's hands, the storm, the unseen fly which buzzes around the cabin—all leading up to the final violent confrontation. Polanski's sureness of touch in creating atmosphere, his ability to raise and release tension, contrasts with the playfulness, if not flippancy, of parts of the film. Critics have remarked on the Christ imagery surrounding the young man: he lies on the deck in the posture of the crucified Christ, a coil of rope making a halo behind his head, he walks on the water, he is resurrected, and so on. However, the recurrent Christ imagery in no way illuminates the central, sexual theme; and if, as has been suggested, it is part of a complex allegory on modern Poland, this must be accounted a weakness rather than a strength.

* * *

The weaknesses of *Repulsion* are few, and lack of relevance of the parts is not among them. Indeed, it is the most single-minded of Polanski's films, every element sucked into the sexual vortex at the centre. Moving outward from the central situation of the film, a young girl's disgust with sexuality and her descent into madness and violence, almost every character, relationship and situation is defined in sexual terms. The central figure, Carol, works in a monosexual institution, a beauty parlour, and a window of her flat overlooks a convent: in both places the sexual security of the women is indicated by their wearing white. Carol shares a flat with her sister, and if this, too, seems a secure world, its security is shattered by the constantly recurring images of the door being broken down by men. The insane distortions of Carol's mental state are conveyed by her view of people through the peep-hole of the door (a 'fish-eye' lens gives the effect of looking in a fairground mirror). Carol's sister (Yvonne Furneaux) is having an affair with a married man (Ian Hendry), and the sounds of their passion contribute to Carol's disturbance. Her friend at work, Bridget, is defined in terms of her own love affair ("Men! Why are they so bloody filthy," she weeps), and the repellent old lady undergoing beauty treatment offers a lengthy diatribe on the swinishness of men ("Keep them on their knees; they love it"). The friends of Colin (John Fraser), Carol's boy friend and first victim, are defined by their sexual banter in the pub, and in a particularly striking scene one of them (James Villiers) kisses Colin playfully on the mouth: innocent horseplay in another context, but here it becomes charged with the weight of sexual disgust in the film, and Colin's response, rubbing his mouth furiously, precisely parallels Carol's after he has kissed her.

Within this framework of thematic unity Polanski deploys a remarkable filmic technique, the closest analogy to which is Hitchcock's in *Psycho*. In addition to the obvious influences of that film (the recurrent eye imagery, the use of the tracking shot towards a potentially menacing area), Polanski unnerves and disorients his audience principally in two ways. Apart from his more traditional surrealist imagery (razors, raw meat), the violent reference of which is absolutely precise, he presents other images which evoke a less precise, but none the less chilling, horror. The most striking is the image of the three buskers, one playing a banjo, the other two bent over hideously playing spoons, and all three advancing, crab-like, into the camera. More usually, Polanski offers an image which appears heavy with menace or horror and turns out to be innocent or banal, thus letting the audience, temporarily, off the hook.

Such is the opening sequence of the film: Carol, her job as yet unexplained, holds the hand of a figure lying on a table.

The wildest horrors flash through the audience's mind: is this an operating theatre, what is that dreadful disease on the face of the figure on the table? It proves to be a room in a beauty parlour and the woman's face is covered with a cosmetic preparation. Or, when Polanski cuts to James Villiers, fingers grotesquely pulling back the corners of his mouth and talking in strangled gasps, it emerges that he is relating a bizarre sexual encounter witnessed in Hamburg. Polanski has always lavished as much care on his sound images as on his visuals, and sounds play an important part in the audience's disorientation in *Repulsion*. He frequently cuts to objects emitting sudden and startling sounds (telephones, doorbells, lift-buttons); and the 'atmosphere' relies heavily on sound or the lack of it: the unearthly jangling of the busker's banjo, the tolling of the convent bell, the off-key piano upstairs counterpointing the violence in Carol's flat, the sound of a razor cutting into flesh.

Despite the single-mindedness of conception and Polanski's flawless technique, *Repulsion* exhibits weaknesses which are perhaps in the nature of the subject. In charting the path of a disintegrating mind, the most original sensibility would be taxed to find adequate images to convey the final stages. Inevitably, Polanski is at his most convincing depicting the early stages of Carol's collapse by subtle distortions in the

knees, confesses to Dickie his hopeless obsession with Teresa (this is restated in the numberless paintings he has done of her); and the sequence in which George discovers the sexual exhilaration of violence by killing Dickie. However, these sequences virtually become lost among the many unassimilated elements of the film. Of these the Pinteresque/Beckettian elements are the funniest. Jack MacGowran appears briefly as Albert, the other gangster, and his comic authority sets a tone and standard which the film cannot sustain after his early departure. The superb locale of Holy Island is itself a magnificent irrelevance, with no better reason for being there than that Polanski is obsessed with the sea. The most obviously unassimilated element is the visit of George's friends, during which the central theme is completely lost and the film, incredibly, becomes just another English comedy.

Despite its grave structural weaknesses, *Cul de Sac* is kept afloat by the power of its conception and, yet again, by Polanski's superb technique. What remains of *Cul de Sac* is the texture of sound and image: the phut of boat engines, the roar of a passing plane, seagulls' screams, the clucking of hens, the texture of Françoise Dorléac's body, a decaying chair in an empty room, a blazing Jaguar.

It has been claimed that *Repulsion* holds up well as a



"ROSEMARY'S BABY": MIA FARROW WITH JOHN CASSAVETES; WITH PATSY KELLY AND RUTH GORDON.

visible world, the reflection of her face in a kettle, or the potatoes with ever more grotesque tentacles growing from them, the naturalism of which enhances their quality as images of a disordered mind. Where in these images the audience is aware of a whole world become sick, in the cracking walls and grasping, disembodied hands of the later stages of Carol's decline, we have no yardstick of normality and see only the ingenious products of the props department. Despite this reservation, however, *Repulsion* remains Polanski's most interesting achievement.

Compared with the tightly constructed *Repulsion*, *Cul de Sac* seems sprawling and formless. It would seem to have been conceived as a study of the sexual humiliation of George (Donald Pleasence) by his young wife Teresa (Françoise Dorléac) and one of the interloping gangsters, Dickie (Lionel Stander). Three key sequences underline this basic motif: the uproarious bedroom sequence in which Teresa forces George to act out her role in nightie, painted mouth and eyes, and turban; the beach sequence in which George, walking on his

documentary account of one kind of mental illness. *Rosemary's Baby* offers the audience the possibility that it is a study in pre-parturitional hysteria; but where in *Repulsion* the audience is certain that it is watching a mind falling apart and is disorientated by the horror of the imagery, in *Rosemary's Baby* it is disorientated by its inability to assess whether Rosemary (Mia Farrow) is mentally ill or whether her apparent imaginings are true. Our assessment veers from one side to another, sometimes approaching certainty that there is a witches' plot against Rosemary, at other times dismissing the apparent conjunction of events as a web spun by a hysterical girl anxious for the safety of her unborn child. This to and fro juggling of audience response is the main structural principle of the film.

The credit sequence, a languid pan over the rooftops of New York, accompanied by a female voice singing a lullaby, establishes a sense of normality (or do we, even at this point, recall the opening of *Psycho* and feel an undercurrent of alarm?). Almost imperceptibly the pan becomes a downward tilt, in response to which our pulses quicken, finally coming to rest at a horribly vertiginous angle on a brown Victorian

Gothic apartment block. The cut to a medium long shot of Rosemary and Guy (John Cassavetes) entering the courtyard brings us, quite literally, back to earth, and the sense of normality is re-established and underlined by the freshness and likeability of the young couple. We share Rosemary's sense of unease when they see the old flat, for we can hear in another part of the building an off-key piano playing the same scales which jangled our nerves in *Repulsion*; but surely there is a perfectly innocent explanation for the former owner having kept a herbarium and having placed a heavy chest of drawers in front of the linen closet.

Once out in the busy normality of the New York street, their decision to take the flat is not at all alarming, but at dinner their friend Hutch's (Maurice Evans) account of the association of the apartment house with violence and witchcraft once more makes us uneasy; more so since Polanski draws our attention to the food and wine while the conversation is about cannibalism among witches. Surely too (we rationalise) our instinctive dislike of the Casteveys (Sidney Blackmer and Ruth Gordon) is because of their campiness, he an elderly Peter Pan, she painted like an old whore; and the suicide of Terry, the girl they had taken off the streets, had surely no more sinister motive than depression caused by the horrors of her past life.

It soon becomes apparent that the narrative is observed from Rosemary's point of view. The audience receives precisely the same information as she about people and events, so that while we are desperately trying to assess detachedly, as an audience, the validity of her fears, we are driven to an intense state of identification with her. This is cumulative. When Rosemary and Guy stay at home to 'make a baby' and she passes out after eating Minnie Castevet's

chocolate mousse, the part of her apparent dream in which she is ringed by a group of naked people, including Guy, Roman and Minnie, and raped by a scaly creature with burning eyes, seems no different in quality from the part in which she is aboard a society yacht reserved 'for Catholics only'. It seems a perfectly plausible dream for a guilt-ridden lapsed Catholic girl to have. The audience can still preserve its detachment and connect the sexual parts of the dream with Guy's confession of having had Rosemary ('in a necrophile kind of way') while she was asleep. However, following the 'coincidences' of Hutch's coma and death, Rosemary's excruciatingly painful pregnancy, the information she gleans from Hutch's book on witchcraft, and most tellingly, Dr. Sapirstein's secretary's casual disclosure that he wears a tannis root charm, the audience believes completely in Rosemary's fears; which makes her 'betrayal' by Dr. Hill the most harrowing moment of the film. And yet, Dr. Hill's calling Sapirstein and Guy again disorients the audience, causing us to reassess our own involvement with Rosemary, to withdraw our commitment if not our sympathy until the final scene which, validating our and Rosemary's fears, demonstrates that instinct transcends ethics and that our capacity to distinguish between appearance and reality, truth and falsehood, right and wrong, is seriously in doubt.

Roman Polanski's vision is profoundly pessimistic. Exploring man's sexuality he finds humiliation, betrayal, violence and madness. It is fitting that the only birth in the Polanski canon should bring forth the child of Satan.

Two of Polanski's films, an episode in LES PLUS BELLES ESCROQUERIES DU MONDE (1963) and DANCE OF THE VAMPIRES (1967) were not available in this country during the preparation of this article and are therefore not discussed.

Rosemary's Baby

Beverle Houston and Marsha Kinder

ROSEMARY'S BABY is not merely a sophisticated horror film. The horror is only one aspect of a complex statement frightening in its relevance. Based on the novel by Ira Levin, the film remains extraordinarily faithful to its literary source. But Polanski deserves the credit for re-creating the meaning in visual terms. The film is about a girl who is trapped in a reality which she cannot believe. She must choose between not believing what appears to be real or believing what cannot be real. The irony is that in this film, Rosemary finally believes the fantastic because Polanski gives it the texture of an undeniable reality, however bizarre.

The story takes the traditional Christ myth and dresses it in its equally traditional Satanic disguise. The film's myth parallels the New Testament, with the divine figure as father of the child, Rosemary as the chosen vessel, the starting of the new era with the birth of the messiah, and the adoration of the child. It treats the myth in such a way that we are forced to accept its literal truth. Yet at the same time we the audience cannot accept what is being presented as real, because for centuries we have believed that the birth of the anti-christ is a detestable lie. Yet the film gives us evidence for its truth that is more convincing than any evidence on which Christian belief is based. The film is frightening because it forces us to examine the kinds and bases of belief. We confront the idea that the Christian myth is certainly no more believable than its mirror image, and possibly less so. And beyond this, we are also forced to realise that our mode of believing in Christianity is quite different from the one with which we perceive 'real' things.

This concern with the nature of reality is expressed in the film's style, tone, imagery and structure. Visually, it presents a highly complex and textured surface which is usually linked to realism or naturalism. The environments are crowded with objects, colours, textures. But on examination, these details arouse conflicting responses to what is being perceived. This conflict is stimulated in a variety of ways. In the scene where Guy has gone to the Casteveys for the second evening, Rosemary is alone in the apartment. She is wearing a very bright, long plaid skirt, predominantly red. The fabric is of a nubby and uneven weave. On the sofa are two pillows of green and yellow that appear to be crewel work, so thickly embroidered that the large flowers stand out in clear relief. Polanski brings these two very strong colours and textures together as Rosemary lies down on the sofa touching the pillows. The colours and textures contend, but he does not permit either to dominate the scene. Then the two older women enter the apartment and their colours and the movements and texture of their knitting complicate the scene and usurp the focus. This purely visual conflict builds towards the dramatic content of the scene, where the two women interrupt the already visually doomed serenity of Rosemary's evening.

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During the scene in which Rosemary and Guy first dine with the Casteveys, Mrs. Castevet's costume, at one level wildly whimsical, creates great tension with the blues, greens, purples, whites, pinks, swirls and dots of its colours and patterns. Elements of the costume fight for dominance and all



lose. Visual reality has no focus. Ironically, in several scenes the blues and yellows of the costumes of Guy and Rosemary create a Bobbsey Twins togetherness of focus that is being proved spurious with every development of plot. This conflict even extends to the make-up. When we first see the Castevetts coming down the street towards the camera, their weird costumes and make-up elicit a dual response. On the one hand the flat pallor of their faces suggests the werewolf and the vampire, but the colours in their make-up and dress are exaggerated just enough to become clownish and grotesque. Mrs. Castevet's circles of rouge and the streaked lipstick on her wrinkled mouth are both ludicrous and pathetic. She is the living dead, but harmless.

Many of these techniques for creating conflict about perception are used in contrasting the two apartments. We move rapidly from the filtered gold and white of 'young love' to the winy and cluttered, deceptively warm browns, reds

"ROSEMARY'S BABY": JOHN CASSAVETES, MIA FARROW, RALPH BELLAMY.



and greens of middle-European decadence. Heightening the contrast, we see the young people transform the browns and yellows of the old apartment as they redecorate it in what they mistakenly believe to be their own image. The contrast takes on an ironic quality when we begin to see that though the two environments differ greatly, these apparent differences are only masks for the similarity of horrors going on in both apartments.

Camera focus and angle aid in creating this conflicting and elusive reality. At one point Rosemary, finally alone in her bedroom, abandons herself to the pain which she has described as burning like a wire. Immediately the camera looks at the streaks of rain on the window and they seem to provide a mysteriously perfect visual metaphor for the wires of pain inside her. The camera moves, and when we see the rain again it seems simply to be rain, yet charged with our recollection of the supernatural in it. Is the rain metaphoric black magic, is it simply rain, or is the whole thing a joke on metaphors?

Repeatedly through the film there are unusual camera angles which heighten reality by close-up focusing on single objects, yet at the same time distort that reality through the angle. The camera does not represent any human perspective, for no human eye would view from its position. For example, in the dinner scene the camera peers down over Mrs. Castevet's shoulder from what could be a neutral view point. But both position and lens exaggerate her already mannered eating style, creating the grotesque by distorting the realistic. Shots from below insist on the mundane reality of feet, floors, thresholds and legs; yet these are imbued with a pointless significance as they are distorted by the bizarre angle.

The heightening of the realistic, which is in contrast to the horror myth, is reinforced by allusions to the world outside the film. Repeatedly we see familiar products (Pall Mall cigarettes, Yamaha motorcycles, *Time* magazine), and hear well-known names (Albert Finney, Open End, *Luther*), which ironically suggest that the characters inhabit our world. The Bramford Building (though renamed) is real and well known, thus anchoring the events in time and space; yet, Rosemary's friend Hutch attributes mythic evil to the building itself.

* * *

These techniques impart a strange tone to the film. They create the impression that never did the details which make up real experience receive greater attention; never were things so clearly seen, so concrete, so 'real'. Yet at the same time exaggeration, conflict and distortion insist that the events are grotesque, that they are not real, and that this perception of reality is not to be believed.

This tone is expressed in the acting style and development. Most of the characters operate in at least three modes of reality. As characters in the film they play roles in a horror story; they also suggest characters in different kinds of film; and finally, as actors in this film, their methods of characterisation are completely different. To demonstrate we might examine John Cassavetes (Guy Woodhouse) and Ruth Gordon (Minnie Castevet). Cassavetes is at once a man who has sold his wife to the devil, a 'sensitive young husband', and an actor whose style is to appear that he is not acting (yet ironically he plays an actor). Ruth Gordon is at once a blood-drinking witch, a nosy old Jewish mother with too much make-up, and an actress whose style is explicitly mannered. Polanski exploits the fact that the acting styles represent opposite extremes in creating theatrical reality. He actually calls attention to the difference in their styles when Cassavetes (as Guy Woodhouse, the actor) mockingly imitates Ruth Gordon (as Minnie C.).

Thus Polanski demonstrates how difficult it is to choose among various and sometimes conflicting perceptions. He created a similar effect in *Cul de Sac*, where the three main characters, on one level, were stereotypes from three kinds of film—the sluttish young wife of French sex films who takes off her clothes at every opportunity, the tough but Puritanical hood from the American gangster movie, and the eccentric English gentleman from the 'weekend in the country' film. All three are conventional characters, but their identities

change when they inhabit the same world and are forced to interact.

Not only do visual and acting techniques juxtapose realities, but there is also a merging of competing mythologies in the film's imagery. In the extraordinarily powerful scene where Rosemary conceives the Son of Satan, there is a merging of images from at least three mythologies: Satan and the witches from the demonic, the Pope and Michelangelo's creation of Adam from traditional Christianity, and the Kennedyesque yachting captain from the modern myth of power. The images in Rosemary's dream are constantly transformed from one to the other. For example, Guy's face dissolves into the demon, and Hutch assumes the role of Pope. These mergings of the various myth figures are further complicated by three modes of reality in the scene itself. Are these images Rosemary's dream, a half-drugged waking vision, or the fantastic reality of the witches' coven? Ironically, the events which trigger the uncertain reality of Rosemary's response are just as fantastic as the images themselves. Rosemary's scream that this is real, and the marks on her body the next morning, attest to their undeniable reality. That Rosemary has responded to them with the mixing of the three myths shows their interchangeability. As modes and myths merge in these ways, the film insists that we believe or disbelieve them all.

But even if we decide to grant such belief, it would not remain constant, for one of the controlling structural elements of the film is a recurring reversal of belief on the part of both characters and audience. In the beginning, Rosemary is the sole believer in Christianity among disbelievers who mock the Pope. She does not believe in witchcraft, yet at that point in the film both Hutch and the audience are beginning to. When she finally is convinced of its reality, she tries to get

help from Dr. Hill, who does not believe her story and questions her sanity. For the first time, the audience considers that Rosemary may be mad. After all, her explanation is fragmented and hysterical; in 'reality', Dr. Hill's reaction may be perfectly reasonable and appropriate. But at this point the audience hopes urgently for Dr. Hill's belief. The audience thus urges belief in witchcraft—a thing which its entire culture calls unbelievable these days. The audience is in this situation—if Rosemary is mad, if witchcraft is not real, then the audience has misperceived the entire experience up to that point also. To doubt her hold on reality is to doubt one's own. But the audience knows that her narrative to Dr. Hill could not begin to communicate the subtleties and nuances of the reality that both Rosemary and the audience have experienced through the texture of the film.

After this scene, the audience eagerly awaits indisputable confirmation of the witchcraft's reality; yet Rosemary doesn't need it. When she finally confronts the witches and the Child, the audience is comforted with this confirmation of the 'reality' of the events—events which everyone in the audience 'knows' must be unreal. But Rosemary's old way of believing serves her in this new situation. Here is a child real enough to mother: she either accepts or ignores its mythic evil. This time she has evidence of the myth's reality of a completely different kind from any that is available for her Christianity. Belief in mythic evil has given way to the pressure of another kind of belief based on a different mode of experience. The film has forced us to face two things. First of all we claim to assign belief to our myths; yet if we do so, it is a different kind of belief than that which we assign to 'reality'. But our desire to hold belief is so powerful that under its pressure we can accept anything.

"ROSEMARY'S BABY": PANIC-STRICKEN RETURN TO THE BRAMFORD BUILDING.



IN THE PICTURE

1968

Films of the Year

HOUR OF THE WOLF *** MOUCHETTE *** 2001: A SPACE ODYSSEY *** WEEKEND. 2nd XI: CHARLIE BUBBLES *** CLOSELY OBSERVED TRAINS *** ELVIRA MADIGAN *** FINIAN'S RAINBOW *** THE FIREMEN'S BALL *** REFLECTIONS IN A GOLDEN EYE *** (plus GERTRUD, MAHANAGAR and REBELLION from earlier years).

THE YEAR OF collapsing festivals (and even more collapsible *contestatori*); of the death throes of Swinging British Cinema; of the invasion of Hollywood by the baleful and seemingly inseparable influences of Lelouch and split screen techniques; of the Langlois/Cinémathèque affair; of *Weekend*, Godard's prophetic reportage on the mood of *les événements de mai*; and of the great non-event of the charge of Tony Richardson's spite brigade against the critics.

Gone With the Wind is revived again, looking twice as big but less than splendid; Brando's *Wild One* motor-cyclist is at last unbanned, with Corman's *Wild Angels* taking its place in the censor's black books; *Star!* settles, hippopotamus fashion, at the Dominion, looking much less like a musical than the sadly underrated *Finian's Rainbow*; Dreyer's *Gertrud* finally emerges in London, to be greeted with a mixture of awed respect from the popular press, outrage from the two posh Sundays and the *New Statesman*, and adoration from the (it goes without saying) happy few; Mamoulian charms everyone with his personal appearances at the N.F.T., Godard charms no one by his non-appearance at the N.F.T.

Two pleasing directorial firsts by Paul Newman (*Rachel, Rachel*) and Albert Finney, whose *Charlie Bubbles* has critics raving and public abstaining; several jauntily unexpected pleasures include *Yellow Submarine*, *The President's Analyst*, *Wild in the Streets* and *Barbarella*; Visconti, with *The Stranger*, offers the worst film by a major director. A rich year for ghastly films, but *Blue* and *Girl on a Motor-Cycle* share the palm for the most embarrassing experience, while John Wayne and *The Green Berets* run away with the special pleading prize.

Obituary

JANUARY: Jules Borkon, producer of *Les Yeux sans Visage*, *Pleins Feux sur l'Assassin*;

Basil Sydney, British heavy, Claudius to Olivier's Hamlet; Noël Calef, French thriller writer (*Ascenseur pour l'Echafaud*); Virginia Maskell, her last performance a stunning one as the quietly despairing wife of *Interlude*; Bert Wheeler, of Wheeler and Woolsey; Jean Murat, French heart-throb of the Thirties, later the ageing Marc of *L'Eternel Retour*.

FEBRUARY: Mae Marsh, 'The Dear One' of *Intolerance*, later stalwart of half-a-dozen Ford films; Donald Wolfelt, last of the Henry Irving breed; Juanita Hall, 'Bloody Mary' of *South Pacific*; Nick Adams, Hollywood actor better known on TV; Eddie Baker, Keystone Cop; Ivan Pyriev, Russian director; Anthony Asquith.

MARCH: Sepp Allgeier, great German cameraman of *Diary of a Lost Girl*, *The White Hell of Pitz Palu*; Carl Theodor Dreyer; Harry D'Abbadie D'Arrast, Chaplin's assistant and director in his own right from 1927-1934; Helen Walker, Hollywood actress (*Nightmare Alley*, *Call Northside 777*); Carlo Montuori, Italian cameraman of *Vivere in Pace*, *Bicycle Thieves*; Charles Chaplin, Jr.; Léon Mathot, French actor and director; Harry Kurnitz, scriptwriter of *Witness for the Prosecution*, *How to Steal a Million*.

APRIL: Fay Bainter, stately, warm-hearted mum of innumerable Hollywood films; Edna Ferber, much-filmed writer, author of *Show Boat*, *Cimarron*, *Giant*; Martin Melcher, U.S. producer.

MAY: Albert Dekker, Schoedsack's sinister

Dr. Cyclops, and subsequently specialist in villainy; Albert Lewin, pleasing eccentric of *Picture of Dorian Gray*, *Pandora and the Flying Dutchman*; Scotty Beckett, small star of 'Our Gang' comedies; Charles K. Feldman, Hollywood producer (*Streetcar Named Desire*, *What's New Pussycat?*); Finlay Currie, grand old Scotsman of countless films.

JUNE: Dan Duryea, unforgettable Leo Hubbard of *The Little Foxes*, specialist in vindictive villainy; Léon Poirier, unjustly neglected director of French silents (*La Brière*, *Verdun*, *visions d'histoire*); Dorothy Gish, memorable sister of the equally memorable Lillian; Sacha Gordine, French producer (*L'Idiot*, *Orfeu Negro*); Sally O'Neil, charming heroine of *Sally*, *Irene and Mary*.

JULY: Lillian Harvey, British toast of German cinema in the early Thirties; Giovanni Guareschi, creator of Don Camillo and Mayor Peppone; Antonio Pietrangeli.

AUGUST: Gerda Maurus, star of Lang's *The Spy* and *Woman in the Moon*; Marcelle Hainia, the charmingly complaisant Mme. Lestingois in *Boudou sauvé des Eaux*; Hunt Stromberg, top producer at M-G-M for many years (*The Great Ziegfeld*, *Idiot's Delight*); Mutz Greenbaum, German cameraman, as 'Max Greene' veteran of countless British films (*The Stars Look Down*, *Hatter's Castle*); Kay Francis, romantic heroine of the Thirties; Robert Z. Leonard, veteran Hollywood director,

"SWEET CHARITY": DIRECTOR BOB FOSSE REHEARSES WITH SHIRLEY MACLAINE.



mainly of amiable M-G-M films; Dennis O'Keefe, breezy hero of Hollywood B films; Martin Fric, Czech director; Benedict Bogeaus, independent Hollywood producer, often interesting (*Diary of a Chambermaid*), always sympathetic; Jean Yonnel, doyen of the Comédie Française, dignified gentleman of many movies; Alexander Hall, Hollywood director (*Little Miss Marker*, *Here Comes Mr. Jordan*).

SEPTEMBER: Cornell Woolrich, frequently filmed thriller-writer, notably of *Leopard Man*, *Rear Window*, *The Bride Wore Black*; Franchot Tone, Group Theatre actor who became a star opposite Joan Crawford in *Today We Live*, *Dancing Lady*; Victor Young, prolific Hollywood composer; Virginia Valli, star of silents and, briefly, talkies (*Isle of Lost Ships*).

OCTOBER: Naima Wifstrand, enchanting witch of Bergman films; Lee Tracy, Hollywood actor from silents to *The Best Man*; Bud Flanagan; William Perlberg, veteran Hollywood producer (*The King Steps Out*, *Song of Bernadette*, *The Tin Star*); Erich von Stroheim, Jr.; Edric Connor, memorable Daggoo of *Moby Dick*; Hoyningen-Huene, distinguished photographer and colour consultant on Cukor films.

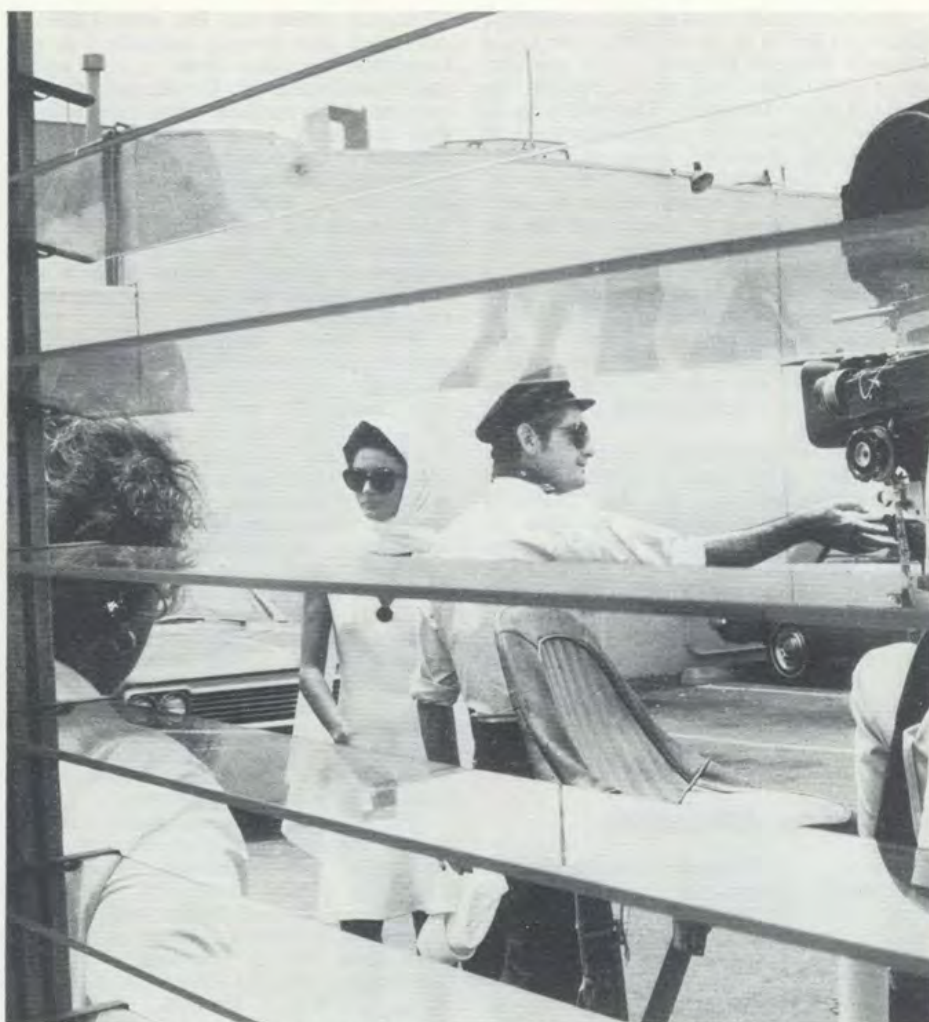
NOVEMBER: Mireille Balin, Gabin's partner in *Pépé le Moko*, *Gueule d'Amour*; Ramon Novarro, great silent star of *The Prisoner of Zenda*, *Scaramouche*, *Ben Hur*; Robert Ayres, Canadian actor in British films; Wendell Corey, quiet Forties star.

Francis Ford Coppola

FRANCIS FORD COPPOLA was in London to mark the opening of *Finian's Rainbow* in a brief dash between the shooting and the editing of his latest film *The Rain People*. It sounds like quite a contrast: after a large-screen musical a relatively small-scale personal drama about a woman running away from marriage, pregnancy and responsibility, and a hitchhiker that she picks up and finds herself gradually becoming responsible for despite her dedication to fugue, all shot on locations across America with a minimum, underground-sized crew and a completely mobile unit travelling in a small cavalcade of seven vehicles. But at least it has one thing in common with *Finian's Rainbow*: Coppola's readiness to take things as they come, to make maximum use of anything that chance and circumstance may offer. This means that both of the films were to a large extent made up as he went along (*Finian's Rainbow* and *You're a Big Boy Now* look spontaneous largely because they were), but he is categorical about improvisation as such:

"In many ways I'm rather an old-fashioned sort of director. I believe that the most important part of the director's job is taking decisions. I would never waste a couple of days covering one line from every possible angle; though I would, if I thought it necessary, spend two days on getting what I considered a key line exactly the way I wanted it. I don't really believe in improvised films as a sort of group endeavour. I don't, anyway, think that I can work like that. Obviously I may sometimes get my actors to improvise, but it is always within a framework and to make a point that I have decided on, and if it doesn't go the right way we work at it till it does. After all, like it or not, I am the only one who can know how the whole film is going to shape and precisely what the function of any particular piece will be."

Finian's Rainbow, it seems, was made



ANOUK AIMEE, JACQUES DEMY ON LOCATION IN CALIFORNIA FOR "THE MODEL SHOP".

entirely on this principle. "They brought me in because I was supposed to be a young, trendy sort of director, and they wanted to up-date the original by making Woody a hippie folk-singer from San Francisco and all that. But for one thing I like the original, and for another it seemed obvious to me that it can only be treated successfully now as a sort of period piece. In its period it has its own coherence, and its comment on colour for instance was perfectly acceptable, but now it would be completely inadequate. So I decided that it had to be handled as what it is, a fantasy without time or place."

"The film had to be made almost entirely on the backlot at Burbank, and I think that in a way that was right. It helps one to avoid irrelevant picturesque and to control exactly the out-of-this-world effect wanted. And then fate took a hand. I was directing from the original stage script, as reworked by me, and I was never prepared more than a couple of days ahead. Then when we were shooting a sequence with the girl who plays Susan the Silent, the metal stage she was dancing on got so hot that her feet were blistered and she couldn't dance for a week. This meant that we either had to lay off shooting while the next lot of sets were prepared, or go on shooting right off the cuff. Since film itself is the cheapest thing in filmmaking, I thought we couldn't lose much by going on, so the next day we did the 'When the Idle Poor Become the Idle Rich' number, just having fun making it up as we went along to fit the track, with no choreographer or anything. (If you look closely you'll see that there's hardly any real

dancing in it anyway.) I found that it cut together as I thought it would, so we went on and did 'If This Isn't Love' the same way. In fact, we were shooting so close to the editing script in my mind that the first rough-cut of the film was only nine minutes longer than the final release print. I don't say that this is necessarily the only way a film should be made, but I think it can certainly help. . ."

JOHN RUSSELL TAYLOR

Cinecenta

"TODAY'S CINEMAGOER IS very different from the kind of person the majority of today's cinemas were designed to reach." An awkward sentence, but it enshrines an awkward truth. The painful shedding of the over-large legacy of pre-war cinema-building optimism has undoubtedly held British cinemas back from reaching their new audience, "the estranged, intelligent cinemagoing public who are being denied a great many good films because of a facility which cannot hope to be economic on specialised product."

The quotations are from Mr. Leslie Elliot, head of the ambitiously adventurous new Cinecenta organisation. In mid-January Cinecenta opens in Panton Street, off Leicester Square, with four small (150-seater) cinemas showing four separate films—*Les Biches*, *Wonderwall*, *Who Saw Him Die?* and *The Sinning Urge*. Other 'multi-unit' cinemas are shortly due to follow in Bradford, Sheffield and elsewhere, adding up to a £750,000 programme.

As a new distribution-exhibition pattern, Cinecenta seems to be starting from some properly rational thinking. (Not too far, incidentally, from the ideas behind the regional Film Theatres.) The policy is to aim films positively at defined markets; to break down cluttering trade distinctions between 'commercial' and 'art house' ("In the main the world makes no such distinction: cinema is considered an art form whether it is Jerry Lewis or Pasolini"); and to try to catch up with "an elusive customer whose needs and tastes somehow remain that one step ahead of the industry's capacity to meet them." A new line in advertising is promised: "Our advertisements will take the form of information and in a sense be self-critical and objective...."

Self-critical advertising from the film trade really would mark a revolution. But Cinecenta's analysis of the problems certainly reads promisingly. So does its first line-up of product, including five films from the 1968 London Festival (by Chabrol, Kluge, Jan Troell, Kjell Grede and Johannes Schaaf). Other interests, of course, will be kept in mind. "A delightful look at every young virgin's problem" and "the voyages of a young widow to the outer limits of promiscuity," are two promises of the new, objective advertising.

PENELOPE HOUSTON

Cambridge Animation

ONE OF THE BEST things about the Cambridge Animation Festival is its informality. Thankfully there is no award system, but rather a determination to stress the business of enjoying and discussing four days of animated films. And the enthusiasm was infectious, the general response being as good, if not better, than last year. All credit to Richard Arnall, the Festival Director, who selected the wide-ranging programme and under whose aegis the Festival is hopefully here to stay.

Unfortunately I was unable to see all the sessions in the retrospective: Forty Years

of French Animation. But what I did see confirmed that French animation is distinguished by a fine sense of style and a rather intellectual wit. Occasionally this can seem precious, not least when shown alongside the work of Borowczyk, who was included in the retrospective since he works in France. Borowczyk has perhaps just the edge over his compatriot Lenica, with a more accessible sensibility and a wider ranging style. *Les Jeux des Anges*, with its ambiguous imagery, muted colours and startling soundtrack, is a terrifying vision of a dislocated world.

Four sessions were devoted to 'Out-standing Animation 67/68' and as usual the Yugoslav contribution stood out. Particularly interesting were *Captain Arbanas Marko* (Zlatko Bourek), based on an old folk song, and *Diogenes Perhaps* (Nedeljko Dragic), a touching story of a little man's search for happiness. Other films of distinction were *Oxed-Man* (Takui Furatwa) from Japan, a terrifying account of one man's persecution at the hands of the society he lives in and animated in the style of Grosz and Munch; *Univers*, Manuel Otero's most recent film and a fine example of how effective a well edited soundtrack (in this case Bartok) can be; and Charlie Jenkins' *Cambridge Steam-Engine*. This was specially commissioned for the Festival and is in very much the same style as Jenkins' work on *Yellow Submarine*: a nice firm line and vivid colours.

The more experimental work was also worth attention, even if it was not always successful. An exception was Philip Latham's *Speak*: with its circles of changing colour and rhythm, and pounding soundtrack it earned a place as the most compulsive film of the four days. Less satisfactory were *A Computer Generated Ballet* (U.S.A., Michael Noll) and *Permutations* (U.S.A., John Whitney). As the product of machines I found their cold aesthetic inhibited identification; surely the essential ingredient of animation.

Of the Festival's two midnight features—*Of Stars and Men* (U.S.A., John and Faith Hubley) and *Yellow Submarine* (U.K.,

George Dunning)—only the second was memorable. There is something infuriatingly arch about the Hubleys' work: one can admire their ability as animators, but all their films and particularly *Of Stars and Men* have an over-soft centre. *Of Stars and Men* attempts to deny the grittier aspects of reality, fastening on to sentimental half-truths instead. *Yellow Submarine* has been re-edited since it was first shown in London. In particular the final sequence as the Blue Meanies are chased out of Pepperland has been substantially altered. By my calculations the film has lost about ten minutes and one song and added a handful of new effects. This does not significantly alter the whole film, but it does help to keep the final sequence in proportion to the rest. On the whole *Yellow Submarine*, despite the excitement of individual sequences, still seems a particularly fragmented piece of work, just held together by the Beatles' collective personality.

The last of the four days saw a talk by veteran animationist Len Lye, who had for once been enticed to leave New York. It was good to have this rare opportunity to see some of his early work, particularly the films made for the GPO unit under Grierson. Watching them, one realised how over the years Lye has restrained an exuberant imagination, trimming away the excess to achieve the final purity of sound and image of a film like *Free Radicals* (1958). At the same time the actual talk, with its emphasis on the links between science and the arts, seemed somewhat removed from the spirit of the Festival.

Clearly the Cambridge Animation Festival has established itself as a viable proposition and the original initiative is more than justified. One can only hope that it will continue to expand and that perhaps it will do something to dispel the notion that animation, if not for children, is far too specialised for a general audience.

PATRICK EASON

Letter from Paris

THE BARRICADES—of *les événements de mai*, to use the standard euphemism—have left the little world of French film-making looking a trifle battered. It is possibly the only concern not to have profited from the greatest strike of French industrial society—apart from material benefits and shortened working hours for studio staff (which will make it even more difficult for young film-makers to set up a production). On top of this, several big American companies have shifted productions away from France to more temperate climes; which means that thousands of working hours are lost to French studios.

Back in mid-May, however, M. Holleaux, the present director of the Centre National du Cinéma, was only waiting to be asked to agree to concessions. But how could one negotiate with someone whose authority you have denied, at the head of an organisation you have threatened to burn down? Today the State has regained its control, and some of the revolutionaries who vilified the Centre National and dragged Holleaux's name through the mud are now first in the queue to ask for an advance on box-office receipts or a place on an official committee.

One point which might quite easily have been negotiated then by the *Etats Généraux* or the *Société des Réalistes* is the suppression or limitation of censorship. And a suppression of censorship would have made

BATTLE SCENE FROM SAM PECKINPAH'S "THE WILD BUNCH".



life easier for Cécil Saint-Laurent, whose first feature, *48 Heures d'Amour*, now runs some risk of a censor's ban. In the last resort, the Minister of Information is obliged to cut when faced by a film which is said to skate across the thin ice which separates the erotic from the pornographic.

This possible ban acts as a reminder of another, rather different, censorship case: the lengthy ban imposed by a different minister on Rivette's *La Religieuse*; which, coincidentally, was made by the same producer, Georges de Beauregard. Rivette's stubborn champion not so long ago, Beauregard has now abandoned him in their difference of opinion about Rivette's latest film, *L'Amour Fou*. It is about a couple who are going through a crisis, and the repercussions on them of a play (*Andromaque*) which they are rehearsing. Without trying to rival Andy Warhol, but satisfying an old dream of making a film about a film being made, Rivette set himself no limits in running time and allowed his leading players, Jean-Pierre Kalfon and Bulle Ogier, complete freedom. The result: a film running 4 hours and 12 minutes, not counting the interval.

His agitated producers, Beauregard and Tenoudji, asked for cuts. As Rivette refused, on the grounds that his experiment is pointless without this freedom from conventional time-limits and traditional boundaries, an 'abridged' two-hour version was made. In spite of a successful test screening of the 4-hour version at the Cinémathèque, the distributors are still unconvinced. Rivette remains unmoved: no shortened version, no mutilation. An art house has agreed to show *L'Amour Fou* in its complete version, provided that the abridged film is not released simultaneously, as the producers want, on the ordinary commercial circuit. Their reasoning is understandable: in an age of speed, audiences are accustomed to taking the shortest route from one point to another. At the time of writing, the debate continues. Rivette, once again, has still to find his way out of the tunnel—and lives up to his reputation as a *cinéaste maudit*.

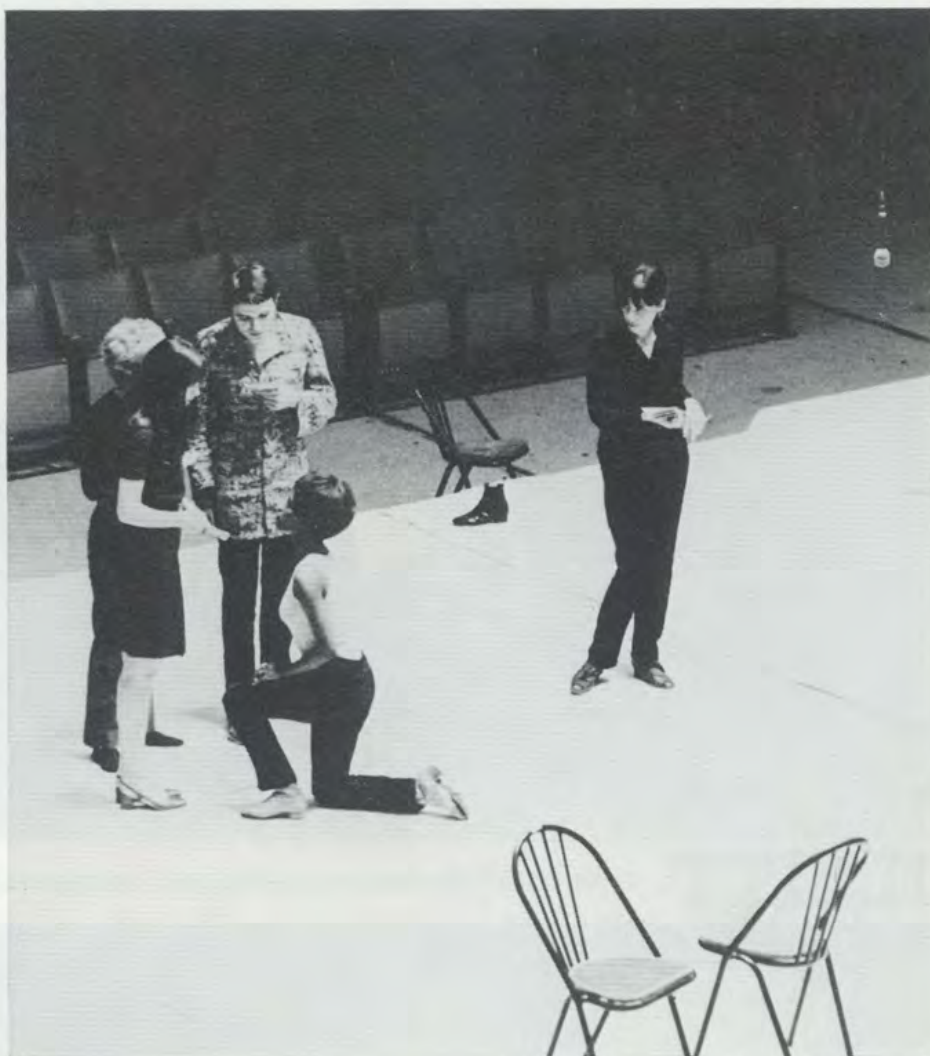
In any case, if the cut version is shown, he won't put his name to it: a symbolic gesture which echoes one made recently by John Berry, who has disowned the tinkering done by his producer on *A Tout Casser*, and brought a legal action in which he has lost the first round. Rivette bringing an action against Beauregard? It might not have the same publicity impact as the *La Religieuse* affair, but at least it would be not unamusing to see the two old comrades in arms fighting this time on opposite sides of the barricades, those famous barricades where we began. . . .

GILLES JACOB

Contestatori

UNTIL THE ARRIVAL of Jean-Luc Godard—whose grievance this time was with his producers rather than with the Festival as an institution—most Londoners (workers and film enthusiasts alike) were probably unaware of the existence of an Open Film Festival timed to coincide with the 1968 London Festival.

People who attended performances in the London Festival's first week may have received a tract announcing, with some disregard for the English climate, that free screenings of unspecified films would be held at unspecified times in "the streets, parks and squares of London," or heard the humming of a generator that enabled a



JACQUES RIVETTE'S "L'AMOUR FOU".

Cuban film about Che Guevara to be projected under Waterloo Bridge. They may have read that directors would be asked to boycott the Festival and donate their films to the OFF for free public screenings. But by the second week, most of the visiting directors had come and gone without being approached by the opposition, and the promised posters had failed to appear on neighbourhood walls. The 35mm. equipment was proving too difficult, though a few workers in Bethnal Green had apparently expressed an interest in Monicelli's *The Organiser*, shown to them by the Open Festival's mobile unit.

Since London's festival has never aspired to the glamour of Cannes, it's probably fitting that its counter-festival should prove unglamorous to the point of amorphousness. And since the Festival is also non-competitive, open to the public and free of commercial pressures, it is hard to see it as part of a wider conspiracy of imperialist aggression or to find a grievance around which to rally dissident factions, unless it's the fact that there are not enough seats for all the people who want to see the films before (hopefully) distributors offer them to a less elite audience.

The Open Festival group—despite their original invitation to a boycott—seemed when I spoke to them to define themselves as an extension of the Festival rather than an alternative to it. Because of the existing distribution system, of which they expressed disapproval, they were finding it hard to get

'relevant' films to show to 'the workers'; they weren't prepared to discuss how directors could boycott distributors, donate their films to the public and still finance their activities; and seemed charmingly unaware that there might be paternalistic implications in a handful of initiates selecting films to present to 'the workers' for the illumination of their problems. (Though maternalistic might be a better word, since the group seemed to be largely run by teenage American girls.)

It seemed a pity that the *contestatori* were too busy contesting to see the films by Bertolucci and Kluge, both concerned with people whose desire to produce some kind of revolutionary spectacle is followed by the discovery that they don't know what to do or how to do it. For there were some relevant films in the unopen festival.

JAN DAWSON

Mrs. Chips

ACCORDING TO actress-singer Petula Clark, the best aid to meditation isn't a Guru but an old English oak tree. "When I'm filming in England, that's all I fancy doing—sitting under an oak and meditating," she sighs. Since Petula spent seven weeks in the heavily-wooded country of Dorset, filming at Sherborne School for M-G-M's *Goodbye, Mr. Chips*, she should have had opportunity enough for her oak tree meditation. "Not a chance," she says. . . .

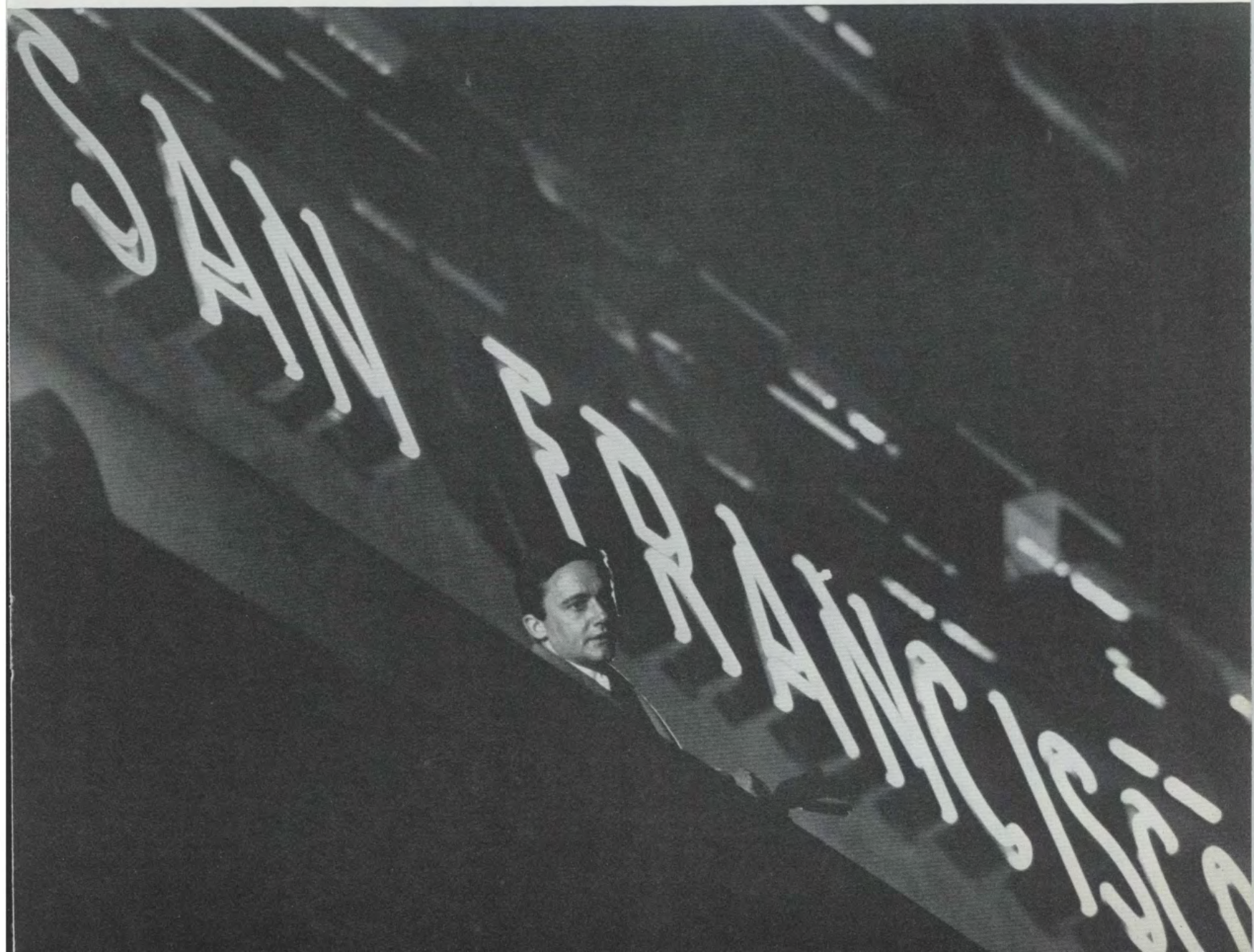
M-G-M Press Release.



BULLITT

Peter Yates's San Francisco thriller: Steve McQueen and Robert Vaughn.







ZABRISKIE POINT

Marsha Kinder

ANTONIONI MAKING his first American film in Los Angeles, centre of the young radicals of the new left. For a leftist film critic who lives in L.A., it sounded too good to be true. By the time I could manage to arrange an interview, Antonioni had gone to shoot on location in Death Valley, which is three hundred miles away. In Los Angeles there was



PHOTOGRAPH BY BRUCE DAVIDSON. MAGNUM PHOTOS.

very little official information available on the film; M-G-M had not yet released any advance publicity. What was the film about? Unknown. Who was in it? Rod Taylor and no one else whom anyone had heard of. What was it called? *Zabriskie Point*—a local rock formation in Death Valley. Where was it being shot? Los Angeles, Death Valley and perhaps elsewhere. Yet the rumours were flying round L.A., and Antonioni's film began to enter my life in unexpected ways.

A friend, who is a maths professor at Valley State College, just happened to be the draft counsellor who was asked to counsel the male lead in the film. The day before leaving for

Death Valley, I was in a restaurant talking about 'the movement' with a friend, when a young man joined our conversation. He was a graduate student in history at UCLA and a member of SDS (Students for a Democratic Society), and it turned out that he had just played a bit part in *Zabriskie Point*. Antonioni was appearing everywhere—on the UCLA campus, at demonstrations, at SDS meetings. In Los Angeles he was shooting stores full of outside objects, car lots full of automobiles with huge price tags, and the billboards that pervade the city.

When I arrived in Death Valley, it was clear that M-G-M was still concerned about releasing too much information about the film. But I had come to talk to Antonioni. Despite his natural reserve and his extremely busy schedule, he was quite accessible and quite willing to talk about his film. At times his reserve could be mistaken for formality, but actually he was good-humoured and open. For example, I had heard that at his recent appearance at the San Francisco Film Festival, which paid tribute to Antonioni with a retrospective of his films, some people in the audience were disappointed by his cool reserve. But his own impressions of the event were quite different.

"San Francisco, it seems to me, is the freest town in America. It was strange, but the reception that I had at the Festival was very formal. The audience was very warm and quite young. They were very pleasant, very nice. They asked me a lot of questions. This dialogue between a director on the stage and the audience is very difficult for me because I can't tell them everything I would like to tell them. If we were a few in a room, I could talk differently. I could open myself more; but I couldn't do this in front of these people. Talking in English is difficult for me. I joked a bit."

Antonioni's sympathy with the young radicals was very apparent. When I asked him what kind of a reception he had received from them, he replied:

"They didn't trust me at the beginning, and they were right. First of all, I walked in and said I was working for M-G-M, for the establishment. But after many, many meetings, and after I had started working with Fred Gardner, who is one of them, and after he explained to them what I was trying to do, they became much more open. And they allowed me to use the initials of their group, SDS, which is important."

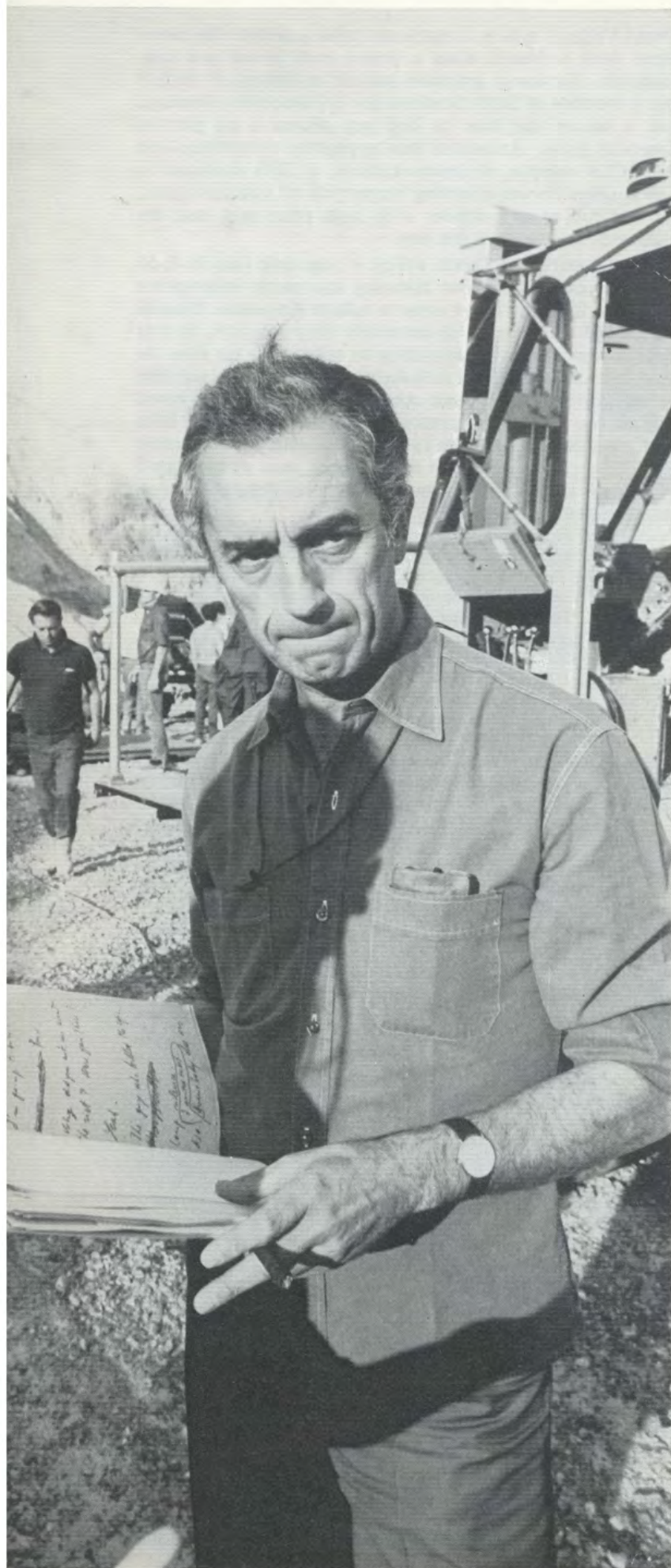
But this sympathy does not mean that he is uncritical of the movement or unaware of the problems it faces. He seemed very sensitive to the differences between student radicals in America and elsewhere.

"The student movement in America is different because they are less together. There are many, many groups. They can't work together yet. You know, this country is so big, so contradictory, that it is more difficult here for them to do something important. When something happens in Paris, it is happening in France. When something happens in Rome, it is happening in Italy. And the same thing for Berlin in Germany. Not here. When something happens in Los Angeles, it doesn't matter for New York—it has nothing to do with New York. What happened at Columbia University was important here, but as an echo. They don't have any relationship. They get in touch sometimes, but they don't work together. At least, that is what they themselves admit."

It would be misleading to over-emphasise the political aspects of this film. Despite rumour, Antonioni sees it as a film about interior feelings.

"I think that this film is about what two young people feel. It is an interior film. Of course, a character always has his background. . . ."

The contemporary context, the young central characters and the setting all seem crucial. I wondered which came first and how he had decided to make this particular film.



MICHELANGELO ANTONIONI.

"I took two trips to America (the first in the spring of 1967 and the second in autumn). I had this idea to do a film here because I wanted to get out of Italy and Europe. Nothing was started in Europe yet, I mean this movement of youth. When I came to America, the first thing that interested me was this sort of reaction to the society as it is now—not just to the society, but to the morality, the mentality, the psychology of old America. I wrote some notes, and when I came back I wanted to know if what I had written down, the intuition, was true or not. My experience taught me that when an intuition is beautiful, it is also true. When I came back I realised that what I had in mind *was* true. I decided on this story when I came to Zabriskie Point. I found that this particular place was exactly what I was looking for. I like to know where the story is placed. I have to see it somewhere to write something. I want a relationship between the characters and the place; I can't separate them from their milieu."

But their milieu was not Antonioni's. I wondered whether he could really feel comfortable in making a film about this world which was essentially foreign to him and in a foreign language.

"I wrote this story, the story is mine. I called in Tonino Guerra, whom I have worked with before; but he doesn't speak English and it was difficult for him to help me get in touch with people, so Tonino went back. When the script was in the synopsis stage (without dialogue or an indication of dialogue), I started to look for someone else because I could not write dialogue in Italian. You can't translate dialogue. An American answers in a different way from an Italian or Frenchman. I wanted to write the dialogue in English. I started to read a lot of plays and books, and I found Sam Sheppard, who started to work on the dialogue for the film. I did the first version of the script with him. I did many versions of the script, and then I got in touch with Fred Gardner, who is one of these young people and very co-operative. The last version of the script was written with him, but I am still changing as I am shooting."

The process of change was very apparent on location. For example it had been reported that the following week Antonioni was importing hundreds of people from San Francisco, Salt Lake City and Las Vegas to shoot a love-in, but on the day of the interview he changed his mind.

"It was just an idea, but I never saw this idea as something real. I didn't have the image, I couldn't find the key to doing it. I saw lots of love-ins in America—with groups playing and people smoking or dancing or doing nothing, just lying on the ground. But I was looking for something different—something which was more related to the special character of Zabriskie Point, and I couldn't find this relationship. I'm going to put it in the film anyway, but in a different way—just a few people and the background almost empty."

Last-minute changes have always been an essential part of Antonioni's method of working. He has never been tied to a script before, and this film is no exception. When asked how he decided a change had to be made, he replied:

"A film is not one thing after another, everything in it is related. I know immediately when something is wrong. And if something is wrong here, the consequence is that it is also wrong later in the script. So if I have to change something here, I have to change something else. I can't judge a line until I hear the line said by the actor at the moment of shooting. Sometimes I shoot two versions of the same scene. I did this on one of the Mobil scenes. I shot one version and wasn't quite happy. I wanted something more ironic so I did another version of the scene. Maybe you hear a suggestion, you see a particular place, or going to the set in the morning you have an idea and you have to explore it."

The Mobil scene to which he referred is a sequence that takes

place in Los Angeles. Antonioni constructed an expensive set high up atop the Mobil Building in downtown Los Angeles, which is supposed to be the plush offices of the Sunny Dunes Real Estate Company. In one shot he simultaneously has in focus a TV commercial for these land developers, the action inside the office, and the view of downtown L.A. outside the window.

When asked about his impressions of Los Angeles, Antonioni commented on the billboards:

"The billboards are an obsession of Los Angeles. They are so strong that you can't avoid them. Of course, there is the danger of seeing Los Angeles as a stranger. To us the billboards are so contrary, but for people who live there they are nothing—they don't even see them. I am going to show them in the film, but I don't yet know how."

Apparently, he chose Los Angeles as a location because of its proximity to Death Valley.

"This story should start in a city that is not so far from the desert. It is easy for someone from Los Angeles to come here. The desert is something very familiar to people who live in Los Angeles."

Yet there seemed to be a more meaningful connection between the two sites. When we were on location in Lone Pine looking at the dry lake bed below Mount Whitney, Antonioni observed that it had been drained because Los Angeles needed the water. It occurred to me that this was another example of Los Angeles as the consumer society. Los Angeles forces upon you an awareness of the materialistic culture; you are constantly confronted with objects to be desired, pursued and replaced. It is both physically and emotionally draining. But Death Valley with its stark beauty merely exists without forcing anything upon you.

When I first heard that Antonioni was shooting in Death Valley, I immediately thought of the settings in *Il Grido*, *L'Avventura* and *Red Desert* and assumed it would be linked to sterility. But once I got there and observed its beauty, I began to suspect that he might not fulfil these conventional expectations, that it might be used in a more complex way. In Lone Pine he casually remarked that Death Valley contains both the highest and lowest points in the United States. It is vast, cosmic and varied. When I asked him specifically how he intended to treat Death Valley, he answered:

"When I came here, I had these two young people in mind. It seemed to me the best place to have them out of their milieu—to be free. Zabriskie Point was perfect; it was so primitive, like the moon. I'm not going to explore this landscape in the film in the same way that you see it when you come here. I want to put it in the background because otherwise it would be too strong."

This particular setting will undoubtedly affect Antonioni's use of colour, for he seemed to use it quite differently in *Red Desert* and in *Blow-Up*.

"In *Red Desert* it was subjective. For the most part of the film, the reality was seen from the view of the woman who was neurotic, so that's why I changed the colour of the backgrounds, the streets, everything. In *Blow-Up* my problem was completely different. I knew London because I had shot there before on one of the episodes in my second film. But when I went back to London, I found it so different. When I am visiting a town I have thousands of impressions and images. The problem for *Blow-Up* was that I had just a few exterior scenes of London, and I had to concentrate all my impressions in these few scenes. So I had to decide, more or less, what was the colour of London—not for others, but for me. I changed the colours of the streets according to the story, not according to the real London. For *Blow-Up* it wasn't really London, it was something like London. But I didn't change the colours very much. In this new film I don't change colours; I try to exploit the colours that I have."

The changes in style are not limited to the use of colour. Antonioni predicted there would be many changes, mainly because he is working in Panavision for the first time.

"The technique for this film is different from *Blow-Up*. I am shooting in order to have the possibilities for choosing a style at the end in the cutting stage. I am shooting in different ways. I am talking primarily about the use of lenses. This is the first time I am shooting in Panavision, and Panavision forces you to use different techniques because the lenses are different. As soon as you get familiar with them, you have to exploit this difference. For example, I am using the sides much more than I did before because in this way you have a stronger relationship between the character and the background."

Since one of the main stylistic changes in *Blow-Up* was the faster pace, I wondered whether this trend would continue in *Zabriskie Point*.

"In *Blow-Up* it was fast, very fast, because the character was lively and needed this sort of pace. I don't know here. In this film the plot is not so precise. In *Blow-Up* there was a beginning, and then something happens, and then you go straight to the end. Not here. The plot is much less strong in this film. The beginning of this film will be almost documentary. No plot at all at the beginning—but a mosaic of many things. And then the characters come out from this mosaic. So I don't know yet how fast the pace or beat will be. While I'm shooting I never think of that."

Since this is Antonioni's first experience of working in America, I was curious to discover whether there were any problems, especially in his relationship with M-G-M. Although he did not feel any restrictions on his autonomy, he did express uneasiness about problems connected with the budget.

MARK FRECHETTE AND DARIA HALPRIN. PHOTOGRAPHS BY BRUCE DAVIDSON. MAGNUM PHOTOS.



"My autonomy, I would say, is complete. They leave me free to do what I want. The only thing now is that they are starting to be worried about the budget. They ask me why the film is so expensive, but that's what I'm going to ask them. I don't know why it's so expensive, I really don't know. I have a crew that is only half the size of what is usual in America because I don't want a big crew."

It was clear that he considered the fact that they were over-budget the fault of the Americans and not his. In fact, he was horrified by the American tendency to waste money.

"It seems to me I'm seeing such a waste of money. It seems to be almost immoral. I feel bad sometimes. For instance, they threw away a piece of gelatine that we used and the piece was still new. There is also a waste of film. If I am shooting with two or three cameras and I need this camera only in the middle of the scene, in Italy I would start with that camera just at that moment. Not here. They start from the beginning. It is a waste of film! They are consumers. They are used to wasting something—goods, materials, food, everything. And I'm not used to this."

Ironically, this tendency towards conspicuous consumption and waste seems to be one of the American characteristics under attack in *Zabriskie Point*.

Antonioni's crew was unusual not only because it was small, but also because it was surprisingly young for a Hollywood film. For many this was their first assignment on a feature, and most of them were very enthusiastic about working with Antonioni. The first assistant director, Bob Rubin, is only twenty-seven and his only experience is in television. Although Harrison Starr was associate producer on *Rachel, Rachel*, this was his first assignment as an executive producer. The still photographs on the set were being shot by Bruce Davidson, a talented and noted artist in his own right. The press agent, Beverly Walker, who is very knowledgeable about cinema, came right from a job with the New York Film Festival. One of the electricians, Jerry Upton, is an avid film buff who has seen most of Antonioni's films several times. Since this kind of crew is unusual in Hollywood, I wondered whether Antonioni had selected it purposely. He admitted that he had tried to get as many young crew members as possible, but added:

"I have some elements of this crew who are not so young—some older people who worked, for instance, on the first film of Greta Garbo, on the first *Ben Hur*, on Stroheim's *Greed*. It's very amusing to talk to them about these things."

His problems were not limited to age; they also involved the unions. For one thing, he had tried to hire some black cameramen to shoot a sequence that takes place in a Negro ghetto but was unsuccessful because he couldn't find any black men in the union. Some of the problems with the unions were also linked with age.

"I had a lot of problems with the unions, and in Hollywood this is much more difficult than in New York. The unions are so strong. There are lots of old people. You can't find what you are looking for. I needed some cameramen and some assistant cameramen—some young people used to shooting in the modern way, people who can zoom without your having to tell them the exact distance from the actors to the camera, people who can make changes on their own and who can sometimes do what they want. I want them to do that, to do something different from the script, maybe. At that critical moment, the assistant cameraman has to make the decision, but the American cameraman can't do this. That's why I was forced to bring some people from Italy."

Antonioni links these difficulties not only to the unions, but

also to the national character. He finds it much more difficult to work in America than in England.

"I don't know why, but English people are much more familiar to me. At the time I was making *Blow-Up*, at least, they were so mad—in a positive and very pleasant way—that they were almost Neapolitan (that's a joke). I like them, I like English people much more than Americans. I mean I find myself closer to them. The Americans are so cool sometimes. They need to know exactly what they are doing. Sometimes they are like Germans—fastidious, precise. This makes me upset because I like to have people around me who are more spontaneous."

This difficulty did not seem to apply to his relationship with his two leading actors—Mark Frechette, a 20-year-old carpenter from Boston who is interested in founding an underground newspaper and who has never worked in a film before; and Daria Halprin, the 19-year-old daughter of Ann Halprin, head of the experimental San Francisco Dance Workshop. Daria is an anthropology major at Berkeley. She reminded me of a miniature Sophia Loren, with plenty of vitality, warmth and guts. In the particular sequence I watched them shoot, Daria was in a car being buzzed by a plane (supposedly flown by Mark). The stunt pilot came so close in one pass that the plane scraped the radio antenna of the car. In the next shot the plane chased Daria as she was running across the desert and came within five feet of her head. She was scared but kept her cool.

Antonioni seemed to select these non-professionals for their naturalness and spontaneity, which he couldn't find among actors.

"I saw a lot of young people—actors and students in acting school, but I couldn't find the right people. And so I started to look for them out of the schools—out of the usual milieu of young actors. And I saw Daria in a film. She wasn't acting. There was a ballet in this film, and Daria was one of the girls dancing. I saw this face coming out from the back, and I was impressed. We made a test, and she was extraordinary. She has the best qualities for an actress. She is so sincere, she can communicate anything, everything. Finding Mark was much more difficult because I made a lot of tests of young people, students and actors before I could find anyone. One of these tests was Mark's."

He felt it was particularly fitting to use non-professionals like Mark and Daria for this film "because this story could have happened to them. They use their own names—first names and family names—in the film because the story is about them." In an attempt to preserve their naturalness, Antonioni is not allowing them to be interviewed or to see the rushes; which is probably a wise decision. The one time I saw Mark and Daria ruffled was when they read their first publicity. At first they were excited to see their names and pictures in print, but when they read the article they were angered by what was said. The writer didn't understand their respect for Antonioni, their attitude towards the film, or their sense of humour. Starring in a movie has not yet destroyed their 'authenticity'. And they know they are not just in any movie, but a movie by Antonioni (although Mark Frechette had never heard of Antonioni when he was first offered the part). They seem to be aware of why he chose them for their roles. Thus, they appear casual on the set while at the same time realise the implications of what it means to be acting in this film. They probably both will become stars, but this will probably be the highpoint of their careers.

And for Antonioni *Zabriskie Point* looks as though it will also be a highpoint. For it deals with some of the most vital contemporary issues, it is visually exciting, and it continues his experimentation with the medium.

1968 London Festival



THE IMMORTAL STORY

SINCE HIS EXILE from Hollywood, Orson Welles has become gradually transformed into a vast, brooding figure of mythology. Nowhere more so than in his own films, where he strands himself like some sad and humbled Moby Dick in oases of decay and bitter regret for things past: as Hastler, the bed-ridden advocate of *The Trial*, he squats amid burning candelabra and dusty files in a decor redolent of ruin; as Falstaff, the foolish, fond old man of *Chimes at Midnight*, he walks with Shallow in a cold, snowy landscape, two old men facing intimations of mortality and pondering the winds of change. Time past and past glories: it almost sums up Welles, from the splendour of the Ambersons to the chimes at midnight tolling the death of Merrie England, by way of the touch of evil which once was truth—and it recurs again in *The Immortal Story*. The original creators, I do not forget, are Franz Kafka, William Shakespeare and Karen Blixen; but the magnificence as film (of the last two, at least) belongs to the mind, the mise en scène, and above all the presence of Welles.

Not that *The Immortal Story*—for all its air of fairytale and its setting in a Chinese Xanadu—is so much about time past or time regained as about time created. For this is precisely what Mr. Clay, the dried-out and solitary old merchant millionaire who sits in his echoing mansion contemplating the erosion of his life, is determined to do when he orders his clerk to stage, in his home and with himself as a player, the shipboard legend which tells how one night, in a harbour town, an old gentleman approaches a handsome young sailor, asks him if he wishes to earn a five guinea piece, and leads him to a room, lighted by candlesticks of pure gold, where there lies a woman...

It is safe to say that no other actor but Welles, as he sits massive, lion-maned and patriarchally remote in his high-backed throne, contemplating the mystery of this fragment of history which has not yet happened, could evoke the feeling (made explicit in the original) that here we have a man exercising his omnipotence in the certainty that he, like Jehovah creating the world, can fashion the universe in his own image. Out of fiction, Mr. Clay wants to make reality; out of past and present, he wants to make a future. And ironically, he demonstrates his omnipotence only to bring himself not immortality but death. For what he creates is not an image of his own reality, past or future, but a timeless fiction. With the rising of the sun which reveals Mr. Clay's death—and would reveal the lines on Virginie's ageing face—the only reality of his whole creation remains locked away in Virginie's heart, and in her young lover's as he returns to the sea with his memories.

The beauty of Karen Blixen's original story is that it fuses perfectly at all levels, opening out layer after layer into, precisely, a story of immortality, of how time past, present and future, fiction and reality, can be re-shaped to create a new time and a new legend. The beauty of Welles's adaptation, despite the slenderest of means (Macao evoked by a patched sail in the harbour) and barely adequate colour and lighting effects (presumably because the film was made for TV), is that it manages to encompass, even add to, the delicate tracery of the original. Not merely the visual allusions—the cell-like room in which the clerk secretes himself “with the certainty that here no one could possibly follow or disturb him”—but the curious sense of timelessness which springs from the fact that Mr. Clay, in trying to bring the world of imagination under control, merely succeeds in lending wings to whatever facts he already possesses.

These facts are: himself, a withered, pain-racked old man, suddenly made aware that his life may not be as secure as he had—if it had ever occurred to him to think about it—thought; his clerk, a depressed, unassuming insect trapped helplessly in his web; Virginie, an ageing beauty, daughter of the business associate he once ruined and now more or less a whore; and the young sailor, derelict and penniless, whom he

“THE IMMORTAL STORY”: ROGER COGGIO, JEANNE MOREAU.

picks up off the harbour streets. With them, he can not only turn the bothersome story-which-hasn't-happened into one which has happened, but "cause to be created" a child to whom he can leave the fortune which he caused to be created by the labour of others. What he does not bargain for is how his story will change these facts into fiction (or maybe new facts): how he himself will die; how Virginie will rediscover her lost innocence in Paul's love; how Paul will become legend in Virginie's love; and how the clerk will become a prophet through the fulfilment of the verses from Isaiah ("And the parched ground shall become a pool") with which he first made Mr. Clay begin to doubt the security of his own existence in barrenness.

On the surface, these are simply four people engaged in staging a sordid comedy for their own purposes of amusement, profit or revenge; underneath they move as freely in time and space as the Wandering Jew (in whom Virginie at one point recognises the clerk), the Drowned Sailor of the Tarot cards (in whom she fears she may see Paul), 'the last romantic couple' of Paul and Virginie, and the prophet Isaiah himself. The film is anchored firmly to old Mr. Clay, seated "erect, silent and alone" in a chair in his mansion in Macao; but with the clerk it slips away to those pogroms in Central Europe from which he, a Jew, fled as a child to wander in exile; with Virginie it ranges from her dreams of glory in Paris with the Empress Eugénie at the court of Napoleon III to her recollections of childhood in this same mansion; and with the sailor, over the seas to shipwrecks and distant lands in the fabulous wake of the Flying Dutchman.

With unerring instinct, Mr. Clay picks his cast from people who, like himself, have known the solitude of living on an island (the sailor literally, after his shipwreck, the others metaphorically); and of course they invade his reality with the siren song of their longings and their dreams. At the end, as the clerk stands on the terrace listening to the mysterious echo in a seashell which is all that remains of Mr. Clay and his drama, and mutters "I have heard it long ago . . . but where?" the wheel comes full circle. He might be Georgie and Aunt Fanny pondering the ruin of the Ambersons; or old Falstaff, remembering the glory that once he knew; or even Welles himself, contemplating his own career which has risen, phoenix-like, from the ashes of those Hollywood days.

TOM MILNE

ONE PLUS ONE

"I was fed up. . . As Lenin put it, 'What now?' So I picked up a political novel, opened it at random and began to read."

FOR THE FIRST TIME, Godard has abandoned even the slenderest pretence to a narrative line, presenting us instead with random and deliberately disordered pages from a 'political novel' in which the illustrations seldom seem either to match the text or to stand in any obvious dialectical relationship to it. Hiding

"ONE PLUS ONE": ANNE WIAZEMSKI.

in a London lavatory before "waiting on the beach for Uncle Mao's yellow submarine to come and get me," an unseen Bolivian revolutionary, in the expressionless staccato tones of the professional pornographer, reads intermittently from a 'novel' in which political figures (the kind who make headlines in *The Times*) are projected into erotic fantasy situations (closer to the *News of the World*): "You're my kind of girl, Pepita," said Pope Paul, lying down beside her on the grass, "but I'm not in the habit of taking women by force."

Meanwhile, the camera intersperses cool, long takes of the Rolling Stones cutting a new record with other long takes of: (1) a group of Black Power militants in a Battersea automobile graveyard, incanting texts by Eldridge Cleaver, LeRoi Jones, etc., and machine-gunning passive Caucasian girl prisoners in immaculate white nightgowns; (2) a television interview in a verdant forest with Eve Democracy (Anne Wiazemski), an inscrutable hippie who replies only 'yes' or 'no' to a string of leading questions about the relationship of culture to revolution; (3) a pornographic bookshop where Iain Quarrier reads aloud from *Mein Kampf* and customers make payment by giving the Nazi salute before slapping two bandaged leftists who respond to this provocation by mechanically chanting a slogan. All intercut with short scenes in which an androgynous subversive (Anne Wiazemski again, but looking remarkably like Guy Fawkes) sprays ambiguous slogans of protest on an assortment of windows, walls, cars and billboards.

Also for the first time, Godard is eschewing dialectic, making an equation of his now familiar contrast between the prostitute and the revolutionary: for though the identification between commercialised sex and counter-revolutionary attitudes survives in the fantasy narrative, where Brezhnev in lubricious four-letter words takes advantage of John Birch's daughter and the Pope is caught with his pants down, this is rendered ambiguous by the fact that the Bolivian revolutionary speaks the language of the pornographer, and pornography is shown in the bookshop sequence as being a tool of Fascism.

This kind of ambivalence characterises *One Plus One*. Instead of creating a dynamic relationship between the different parts of his film or giving them each a metaphorical value, Godard deliberately maintains their separateness. What he offers us is not so much a collage as the component parts of a collage (quotations, magazine covers, graffiti, political fantasies, the undoctored reality of the Stones, the formalised reality of the Negro in the junkyard, the symbolic and theatrically organised interview with Eve Democracy). And with the commentary insisting on the arbitrary and unsatisfactory arrangement of the pieces, we are implicitly challenged to reorganise them, to edit our own film and thereby ensure the truth of Godard's axiom that "what is alive is not what's on the screen but what is between the audience and the screen."

But the corollary of this axiom is that it is not reality but shadows that we see upon the screen; and to persuade us physically and not just abstractly of its truth, Godard ensures (by denying his actor/characters any semblance of spontaneous dialogue) that each section of his film is charged with a certain lifelessness. The revolutionary reads from a novel which is already written; the black militants read from existing texts, while Frankie Dymon has the phrases of one of his own speeches fed to him by a prompter; the interviewer puts words into Eve Democracy's mouth; the bookseller becomes a mouthpiece for paragraphs from Hitler; and the fact that the Stones are shown in rehearsal rather than performance—with single lines repeated perhaps a dozen times—means that even their new song soon begins to sound like a quotation.

Perhaps it is an act of bad faith to attempt a critical or analytic assessment of an anti-film that becomes largely one's own creation. But then (and judging by several of his 'quotations' which define culture and intellect as the real enemies of revolution, no one is more conscious of this than Godard) the making of a film-to-end-films, or an intellectual fantasy to denounce things intellectual, is in itself suspect. Experience, observation or student militants may have taught Godard that "there is only one way to be an intellectual revolutionary and that is to give up being an intellectual," but he is an unsuccessful



ful pupil in his self-constructed 'school of deculturalisation,' at his most hermetic when seeking to avoid the pitfalls of elitist art. His anti-editing innovates even while his 'dialogue' implicitly acknowledges that novelty is an illusion and the words have all been said before. Though the collage form of his film seems like an invitation to leave the shadows of art for the harsher realities outside it, to form our own conclusions and determine for ourselves the possible relationships between irreconcilable facets of our society, Godard also recalls that "When the novel is dead, then the technological society will be totally upon us."

One Plus One may be anti-culture in so far as it contains no visual or aural references to the monuments of the past (no old buildings, no Mozart, not a single quotation that predates the 1930s); but the concomitant lifelessness of this denial of the past, this rejection of all structuralism as a form of militarism, provides a powerful argument for the heritage that Godard appears to be abdicating. The paradox is insoluble: and for all its humour, the film often seems an act of despair and self-mutilation on the part of an artist who would rather be an activist, and who wishes simultaneously to destroy art in the name of revolution and to create through art a revolutionary society.

Nor is this contradiction only present on the theoretical level. The separateness of the different groups of 'characters'—intended as a *method*—becomes a *leitmotif*, giving the film a beauty and thematic unity it ought not (theoretically) to possess. The Stones are as isolated in their separate recording booths as is Eve Democracy among the TV predators or the lone slogan writer in the Hilton Hotel. The flat, arithmetical arrangement of the different sequences (the title is significant) equates what man has made of man with what he might make of him, giving all tasks—of demolition (Eve's), creation (the Stones), reconstruction (the black militants) or auto-destruction (Godard's)—an air of equal futility. The deliberate staleness of the second-hand words and the absence of any real action (in contrast to the violent slaughter of *Week-End*, the shooting of the girl prisoners is treated almost parenthetically; the camera keeps its distance and they die out of frame) seem as much an incitement to indifference as to militant change. As in *Breathless*, the choice again seems to lie between grief and nothing.

For if the film demands to be edited and organised, so do the ideas it contains, unless one interprets the whole thing as a metaphor for England, with extremists of every persuasion co-existing lifelessly side by side. The questions are asked (not least among them, that of the relative effectiveness of the Rolling Stones and Jean-Luc Godard as forces of change: the simplicity that enables them to link the deaths of Christ and Kennedy in a single song is clearly something that Godard envies) but they remain unanswered and perhaps also unanswerable.

Though it may be true to assert that most of our thoughts have been voiced for us and that we may as well speak in quotations, there is a basic contradiction between borrowing other people's words and doing one's own thing (unless one acknowledges the collage as the most creative form of art). Once the intellectual revolutionary stops being an intellectual and starts speaking in slogans he becomes, like the peaceniks in the pornographic bookshop, an automaton, a creature whose responses to the graffiti on the advertisement hoardings are as reflex and unthinking as those of his fellow citizens to the advertisements themselves. The statement that "the tragic irony is that in fighting communism we are creating... communism in our own society" is tragically and ironically true in reverse. By fighting fascism and anti-communism, by defining this fight as a rejection ('smash the windows, drop out'), we situate our revolution in a fascist framework. By rejecting our cumbersome heritage of culture and academic discipline, we find our voice only in Hitler's ideology for the masses, and assert the ascendancy of propaganda over art.

The violent alternatives envisaged in *Week-End* are now seen linked in a vicious and lifeless circle, in the centre of which Godard petulantly casts Stones after swine.

JAN DAWSON



"LES BICHES": STEPHANE AUDRAN, JACQUELINE SASSARD.

LES BICHES

EVEN A FILM-CRAZY computer, fed with appropriate details of all fourteen Chabrol features (and three sketches), from *Le Beau Serge* to *La Route de Corinthe*, could hardly have come up with a more quintessentially Chabrol film than *Les Biches*. Everything is here, from garrulous grotesques to idling rich, from atmosphere of sinister Hitchcockery to inversion in the roles of good and evil; yet there is one important difference, which makes this by far his most subtle and most controlled film to date.

Almost perversely, in telling a tale of perversion, Chabrol has given the film a deliberately muted air of tranquil elegance. Whether one chooses to explain this as a new maturity, or as the effect of an increasing transference of allegiance from Hitchcock to Fritz Lang (maybe this comes to the same thing?), the fact remains: somehow all the jagged nerves, jokery and crossed emotions are smoothed, toned down and neatly dovetailed into a texture of creamy gentleness, as doe-eyed as the murderous heroine herself. The result is a film which, in its exploration of the tortuous relationship between three people who can never be quite sure whether they are acting (in either sense) or being acted upon, maintains a constant tension between facts and appearances.

Right from the opening sequence, Chabrol plays cunningly on the disparity between the seems and the is. As the camera hovers hungrily, the hard-faced, elegantly predatory Frédérique (Stéphane Audran) circles around the poor, vulnerable young art student Why (Jacqueline Sassard), dropping a sensuous five hundred franc note on the pavement beside her sketch before luring her inexorably up to her hotel room. Once there, however, Frédérique is placed in the position of humble suppliant, while Why, secure in the knowledge that she is needed more than she needs, becomes carelessly, cruelly exacting.

Already one can see, in silhouette as it were, the vulnerability behind Frédérique's hard shell (and *vice versa* with Why); and with wonderfully serpentine subtlety, Chabrol documents the process by which the two women literally change places. On the surface, as Why falls in love with a young architect (Jean-Louis Trintignant), and Frédérique, in seducing him to try to protect her property, herself falls madly in love with him, the film is a brilliant exercise in unconventional *marivaudage*; underneath, it is a strange labyrinth in which the characters are no longer able to distinguish between the seems and the is of their own emotions.

Does Why really love Paul, who regards her merely as a casual conquest, or is he simply an unattainable dream? Does Frédérique really love him, or is she simply making sure that Why remains attainable? And does Paul really love Frédérique,

or simply cling to her as apparently less attainable than Why? While never answering in so many words, but proceeding by hints and suggestions, the film plots an unmistakably clear chart of their relationship. One notices, for instance, that Frédérique, for all her calculating exterior, is open-hearted and generous to her friends and the two parasitic queers who have the freedom of her house; and that Why, on the contrary, barely talks to anyone if she can help it, and deliberately manoeuvres to get Frédérique's friends out of the house. One notices that Why, the virginal victim, has a white-walled bedroom, whereas those of the two seducers are blue (and blue is a softer, gentler colour than white). One notices a moment of cruelly ambiguous accuracy when Why bursts into tears after the departure of Paul and Frédérique to Paris, and the two queers, annexing her despair to a game of 'What animal am I?' instantly recognise "Crocodile tears!"

One could go on citing examples, both visual and verbal, but the point seems clear. Frédérique *seems* what Why *is*; and the final shot of the film has a chilling truth over and above its effectiveness as a black joke. Why, who has become increasingly obsessed by the physical resemblance she has discovered between herself and Frédérique (so cleverly evoked in the film that one wonders why one hadn't noticed it oneself earlier), decides that she can no longer live without Paul and/or Frédérique. She comes to Paris, stabs Frédérique with her own poisoned dagger, puts on the latter's coat and, as Frédérique, waits for Paul to arrive. The last shot cuts outside as Paul rings the doorbell. Will he, one wonders, notice that what was now only seems?

Much of the film is unequivocally funny, either in that characteristically ghoulish, pantomimic Chabrol manner, or in the cool insolence with which his camera circles the characters, picking out and displaying their foibles and manoeuvres like specimens on a drawing-board. The first encounter between Paul and Why at a party under Frédérique's baleful eye, for instance, is choreographed like a chess game, with sly glances making inroads into enemy territory and the camera triumphantly recording "Mate!" by exactly reversing its viewpoint. There is, too, a deliciously funny sequence, central to the ambivalent relationships of the film and rhymed to Paul's attempts to tell a rambling story, which get more and more hesitant as both he and the two women get drunker and he gradually becomes aware of a curious triangular system of caresses.

Set pieces like this, or the wild eccentricities of the pair of grotesques, have been the staple of every Chabrol film since *Les Cousins*, but never before have they been so integrated into the texture of the film, or so subordinate to its theme. Stylistically, the tension between tormented content and

tranquil form is so perfect that it is almost invisible. The battle royal for possession of each other between these three people takes place in a landscape of undisturbed beauty: pale pastels of St. Tropez in the soft winter light echoing the delicately inexpressible emotions we witness; the soothingly elegant camera careful not to upset the delicate balance. *Les Biches*, appropriately titled in every way, is like some shy animal tiptoeing its way, surefooted and hesitating, through a treacherous bog.

TOM MILNE

PARTNER

PARTNER IS BERTOLUCCI'S first film for four years and it was well worth waiting for. His previous film, *Prima della Rivoluzione*, was shown at the Festival in 1964 and is only now getting a commercial showing. Hopefully *Partner* will not have to wait for so long, for it is a fantastic film, as rich in suggestive imagery as its predecessor, clearly marked with the stamp of authorship and at the same time a development and an enrichment of Bertolucci's previous thematic and stylistic concerns.

The most obvious change from *Prima della Rivoluzione* is that *Partner* is in colour and 'scope. The colour on its own is a feast, alternately mellow and pop-art garish. The straightforward landscape shots of Rome are sensuously evocative, giving the feeling of a permanent lingering sunset at the heart of historic civilisation. But there are deliberate discords: a grey street urinal bedecked with red, blue and yellow NLF flags; the white room in which the hero (or his double) murders a girl with painted eyes who goes around with a lurid array of washing-powder and detergent packets. Some of the effects at this end of the scale seem Godard-influenced, but it is an influence which has been well absorbed, for essentially Bertolucci's use of colour here is only an extension into a new dimension of the stylistic procedures pioneered in *Prima* and of his search for the maximum expressiveness in every visual element and every situation.

The same observation holds good for the thematic. Two themes stand out in *Partner*, both of which were present in submerged form in *Prima della Rivoluzione* and now receive more prominent and extensive treatment: hope for and despair of the Revolution, and the relationship of life to art and in particular the cinema. When these themes broke surface in the earlier film—in the long conversation between Fabrizio and his Communist friend at the festival of the *Unità* and in the scene at the café with Fabrizio's friend who could not live

Continued on page 51

"PARTNER": PIERRE CLEMENTI.



London Festival Chart

Festival round-up by a group of SIGHT AND SOUND writers. Some films have already been written about in our various Festival reports; others will be reviewed when they open in London.

★★★★ TO ★ INDICATE CRITICS' RATINGS ● INDICATES ANTIPATHY	JAN DAWSON	COLIN McARTHUR	GAVIN MILLAR	TOM MILNE	JAMES PRICE	DAVID ROBINSON	PHILIP STRICK	JOHN RUSSELL TAYLOR	DAVID WILSON
Adelaide (Jean-Daniel Simon)	●	●	★	●	●		★	★	●
Artistes at the Top of the Big Top: Disorientated (Alexander Kluge)	★★★		★★	★★★	★★★	★★★	★★★	★★	★★★
Baisers Volés (François Truffaut)	★★★		★★★★	★★	★★★★	★★★★	★★★	★★★	★★★
Les Biches (Claude Chabrol)			★★★	★★★★	★		★★★★	★★★	★★★
Black on White (Jörn Donner)	★	●	★	★★	●	★	★	●	
Capricious Summer (Jiri Menzel)	★★★	★	★★★★	★★★★	★★	★	★★★	★★★★	★★★
The Chronicle of Anna Magdalena Bach (Jean-Marie Straub)	★★★★	★★★	?	★★★	★★★		★★★	★★★★	★★★
The Delinquent (Johannes Schaaf)	★		★	★★	●		★		★
Don't Look Back (D. A. Pennebaker)	★★	★★★★	★★★		★★★		★		★
L'Enfance Nue (Maurice Pialat)	★★★	★★	★★★★	★★★	★★★	★★★	★★	★★★	★★
L'Eté (Marcel Hanoun)	●	●	●	●	●	●	●		
Everything for Sale (Andrzej Wajda)		★★★★	★★	★★★★	●	★★★		★★	★★★
The Firemen's Ball (Milos Forman)			★★★	★★★	★★	★★★	★★★	★★★	★★★★
Hugo and Josefin (Kjell Grede)				★★★	★★		★★★	★★★	
If . . . (Lindsay Anderson)	★★	★★	★★	★★	★★★★	★★★★			★★★
The Immortal Story (Orson Welles)	★★★	★	★★★	★★★★	★★	★★	★★★★	★★★	★★★★
Kaya (Vatroslav Mimica)		★★	●	★★★	★		★★★★		★★
Memories of Underdevelopment (Alea)	★★	★		★★	★★★	★★	★★	★★★	★★
Monsieur Hawarden (Harry Kümel)	●	★	★	●	★★	★★	★	★★	★
One Plus One (Jean-Luc Godard)	★★★	●	★	★★★	●	★	★★★★	★★	●
Partner (Bernardo Bertolucci)	★★	★★★	★	★★	★★★	★		★★	●
The Secret Life of an American Wife (George Axelrod)		★★★★	★★★	★★★★	★★★		★★★★	★★	★★★
Shame (Ingmar Bergman)	★★★★		★★★★	★★★★	★★★	★★★★	★★★	★	★
Signs of Life (Werner Herzog)	★★★★	★	★★★★	★★	★★★		★★★	★★★★	★★★★
They Call Us Misfits (Lindqvist, Jarl)	★			★★	●	★★	●	★★	●
Tropics (Gianni Amico)	★★	★	★★	●	★★	★	●	●	●
Who Saw Him Die? (Jan Troell)	●	★★★		●	★★★	★★★	★★★		★★

David Robinson

CASE HISTORIES

MAYBE WE ALWAYS KNEW that Swinging London was only a myth, the invention of *Time* and *Life* and the ad men. But Britain's swinging cinema was for a period a nightmare reality. Perhaps *Billy Liar* was the turning point. The original Waterhouse-Hall play seemed distinctly to belong to the realist cinema and theatre of the fifties, to the era of *Look Back in Anger*, *Room At the Top*, *Saturday Night and Sunday Morning* and (in itself indicating other new directions) *This Sporting Life*. John Schlesinger's earlier film, *A Kind of Loving*, also belonged to this mood. But in the film of *Billy Liar* (which had been directed on stage by Lindsay Anderson) there are clear indications of what was to come: the dream sequences, the devices (if I remember rightly); Julie Christie.

At all events the Swinging Cinema was well under way in 1964, with Richard (then Dick) Lester's first Beatle film, *A Hard Day's Night*, and with Ken Russell's first work for the cinema, *French Dressing*. The following year brought *Help!*, *The Knack*, *What's New, Pussycat?* and the biggest success of the whole era, Schlesinger's *Darling*. By 1966 it seemed difficult to make a film outside the new pattern. Losey made *Modesty Blaise*; Karel Reisz moved into the swinging sector with *Morgan*; Silvio Narizzano applied the treatment to *Georgy Girl*, an old-fashioned sentimental story that was in

OF THE NEXT

origin almost a sixties *Little Women*, with enormous commercial success. 1967 started with *Blow-Up*, but *Privilege*—which was *Blow-Up*'s team-mate at Cannes—clearly marked the beginning of a decline. By the end of the year Michael Winner's *I'll Never Forget What's His Name* and Desmond Davis' *Smashing Time* were clearly the vestiges. Peter Whitehead's *Tonite Let's All Make Love in London* looked archaic, at once a faded memory of the myth of Swinging London and of the New British Cinema.

For a style of cinema had been developed appropriate to the popular mythology. The influences which produced it were various: the popularisation (!) of pop art; the graphic adventures of the colour supplements and TV commercials; the arrival of new directors from television who had rediscovered the devices which Méliès had used with charm and discretion but which they wielded like bludgeons; uncritical and unassimilated admirations for Godard; the slackened reins of censorship; the wilder excesses of Fellini; the post-Antonioni rejection of conventional narrative and the post-Resnais taste for mystification; self-confidence bred by the export market in British pop-music and pop-fashions; sheer bedazzlement in the end with the whole swinging vision of a Britain of boutiques and Beatles and dolly girls and Carnaby Street. Somewhere along the way the baleful influence of Claude Lelouch was added to the rest. The results—the disregard of form and structure, the visual extravagance, the devices used like purple phrases and exclamation marks in schoolgirl prose, the tourist fantasies of a colour-supplement Britain—were predictable more often than they were exhilarating.

For a time all went well. Not all the films were bad, and there were enough commercial successes—the Beatles films,

Darling, *Georgy Girl*, *Blow-Up*—to convince producers in the States that here was a goldmine, an endless supply of new talent and ideas. For a while it seemed that every young British television director or theatre director with a success to his credit, or even without, was wooed to make films with American money. Perhaps at no time in the remembered history of the cinema had the money-men been so receptive to new people and new ideas. It was a brief Utopia. Inevitably producers' enthusiasm outran their judgment. Inevitably a lot of the new talent proved no talent at all. More than one American company must be paying the price of the adventure with an expensive little cache of unmentionable films that have still to see the light of day and will look pretty jaded if they ever do.

The trouble is that now the cost is being passed on in terms of greater caution on the part of the producers, a mass withdrawal from adventure. Their latest experience has confirmed all the old mistrust of new people and ideas, of anything outside the run of their commercial experience. Meanwhile, too, the success of *Bonnie and Clyde* and *The Graduate* gave Hollywood new self-confidence and further encouraged American producers to spend their money at home. Practically all the directors dealt with in this article are agreed that they benefited from the atmosphere prevalent eighteen months or two years ago, and that they might very well have experienced greater difficulty if they had now to set up their first films.

* * *

The most conspicuously successful among the directors who have established their reputations or come into the cinema in the past two years are Anthony Harvey and Kevin Billington, each of whom now finds himself in the happy position of having a substantial American box-office success to his credit. Harvey, now 36, is the only one of the entire group to have come up the traditional way from within the film industry itself. While still at school he made his one and only appearance as an actor in a film, as Ptolemy in Gabriel



"THE LION IN WINTER": KATHARINE HEPBURN.

Pascal's *Caesar and Cleopatra*. Later he went to R.A.D.A. on a scholarship, but decided after a spell in repertory that he was not really an actor. For a while he worked with the Crown Film Unit and learned something about editing from breaking down documentaries into library shots. He became an assistant cutter; and still recalls with as much surprise as gratitude how the Boultings let him cut *Seagulls Over Sorrento* when he was still barely 22. Regarding cutting as "40 per cent of the creation of a film," he became one of the

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best cutters in the business. His credits include *I'm All Right, Jack* for the Boultings, *Lolita* and *Strangelove* for Kubrick, *The Angry Silence*, *The L-Shaped Room* and *The Whisperers* for Bryan Forbes. He became such a useful cutter that he was increasingly despondent about his chances of breaking out to become a director.

Then, while in America, working on Ernest Pintoff's *Harvey Middleman*, *Fireman*, he saw LeRoi Jones' *Dutchman*, felt "it would make a good movie because of its powerful language and strong poetic writing" and, without any immediate prospects of raising money to do it, asked Jones for an option on the screen rights. Shirley Knight had worked in the play in California; and her husband Gene Persson raised \$60,000 to make the film, which was shot in six days. It was to have been made in New York, but the transport authorities objected that the film was liable to encourage violence in the subway, so it was made instead in this country. (Harvey was almost arrested along with his producer and cameraman while making establishing shots of the subway in New York.) Even disregarding the circumstances and economics of the production, the film is a remarkable *tour de force*; the tensions are sustained without a moment's flagging, and the performances by Shirley Knight and Al Freeman Junior are astonishing.

Peter O'Toole saw it and thereupon wanted to do a film with Harvey. O'Toole was scheduled to make Romain Gary's *Ski Bum* for Joseph Levine; and when that fell through for one reason or another, Harvey was asked if he would like to direct *The Lion in Winter*, James Goldman's play about Henry II and Eleanor of Aquitaine, which had had a comparatively sad time on Broadway. Harvey liked the screenplay which Goldman had prepared. "I found it extraordinary in its penetrating observations of loneliness and the failure of human beings to communicate at the most vital moments of their lives . . . These are people who love each other very much but keep missing each other in the darkness . . . At the same time this is an extraordinary family of juvenile delinquents." He accepted and made the film for Levine on a budget of four million dollars. Levine permitted him to work with complete independence. Harvey repaid him with a remarkable study of the psychology of a group, a class, a period (Goldman's script analyses the historical, hierarchical situation in terms of contemporary language and psychology) that is consistently elegant and tense.

Already it has proved a commercial success in America, and Harvey is preparing another big picture, this time for Sam Spiegel and Columbia, from Robert K. Massie's *Nicholas and Alexandra*. But he is very genuinely concerned not to become typed as a director of big pictures. "I see these directors who made marvellous films when they were young, but then they compromised on what they wanted to do in order to make 'big' films, and now all the freshness is gone out of their work. They're very rich and, I imagine, very bored." After *Nicholas and Alexandra* he would like to make another film on the scale of *Dutchman*.

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Kevin Billington is two years younger than Harvey. Like him he arrived at his first film with a firmly based technical equipment, though in Billington's case it had been acquired in television. After Cambridge he spent a period in Sweden, working variously in a night club, as a mountain guide and teaching English. In the last capacity he began to work for Swedish radio and television, on English teaching programmes. He stayed in radio when he returned to England, working for the BBC in Leeds. Late in the fifties he moved to Manchester and television, where he cut his teeth on *Gardeners' Question Time* and *The Week Ahead*. Then Donald Baverstock picked him out (in a lift one day) for *Tonight*, where he stayed for four years, at first directing in the studio, but fairly soon taking units out to film stories on location.

He found *Tonight* an incomparable training school. Generally he was shooting a couple of four- or six-minute stories a week, having the slightly odd experience of sending back material which he did not see until it was transmitted in edited form. For something like three years, in fact, he was



DIRK BOGARDE IN "SEBASTIAN".

making around a hundred films a year. "Even an idiot with all that film going through the camera would get it right." As an apprenticeship there can have been nothing quite like it since Griffith's early days at Biograph; and Billington feels it is tragic that there are now no regular magazine programmes using film on the scale that they did when he, Jack Gold, John Schlesinger and Ken Russell were with the BBC.

From *Tonight* Billington moved on to direct full-length documentaries for television. *Matador*, *Twilight of Empire*, *A Socialist Childhood*, *The Guards* marked him out as a filmmaker of more than ordinary powers and personality. David Deutsch, who had produced *Nothing But the Best* and John Boorman's first film *Catch Us If You Can*, asked him to direct *Interlude*, from the screenplay by Lee Langley and Hugh Leonard. In 1966, with the swinging cinema at its zenith, there was a certain amount of resistance to a film so determinedly against the trend as this; but Deutsch and Billington stood out against the pressures upon them to introduce the Swinging Britain element. *Interlude* not only marks a return to romanticism, but it also asserts the principle of the well-made film. After his long television experience, Billington has immense technical assurance; and *Interlude* is above all a beautifully accomplished film, perfectly tuned to its purpose which is "first of all to make people relax, so that then you can say things that are true and moving."

The romanticism and the sheer quality of *Interlude* clearly found their mark. Not only did the Columbia people like their product (which was important, since they were the ones who had to sell it) but it has proved an enormous box-office success wherever it has been shown. Which means that Billington has been bombarded with scripts and propositions, most of them, of course, unsuitable or unlikely or unlikeable. An energetic man, used to the pressures of television, he is irked by the long period in between films. A plan to do Patricia Highsmith's *Those Who Walk Away*, as well as a subsequent plan to do *Adventures in the Skin Trade*, have both been postponed because of casting difficulties.

Jack Gold was a contemporary of Billington's in the *Tonight* school. Before that in 1955 he had gone straight from



LEFT: ALBERT FINNEY AND LIZA MINNELLI IN "CHARLIE BUBBLES". RIGHT: OSKAR WERNER, VIRGINIA MASKELL IN "INTERLUDE".

University College to BBC Radio. About the time that he was making two very able amateur-status shorts, *Happy As Can Be* (which was shown by BBC television) and *The Visit* (1956), he joined BBC TV as a trainee and became an assistant editor. He worked in Schools Television in the first days, then went on to *Tonight* where he was cutting five film stories a week before getting the chance to direct. He has the same high regard as Billington for the training he received at this time. "In television filming you learn to think quickly and react quickly." After *Tonight* he made a great variety of documentary programmes for the BBC and more recently for ATV (*Wall Street*) and Rediffusion (*Famine*). Unlike Kevin Billington, who had surprisingly hardly worked with actors before he came to make *Interlude*, Jack Gold has intermittently done a good deal of drama for television. Years ago, in the wake of *That Was the Week That Was*, he directed *My Father Knew Lloyd George*, a satirical farce with most of the TWTWTW team. More recently he filmed *The Lump* for BBC and directed a series of three A. E. Coppard stories for *Omnibus*. Like Billington again, he was offered a film by a producer who had liked his television work. *The Bofors Gun* was in fact the second project offered him by Otto Platchkes, after he had turned down one idea. Gold was able to work without pressures or compromise in his first feature film. "If you can't put on the screen what you want to do, why do it?"

Unlike Billington, Gold found himself with something less than a commercial winner, even though the notices were excellent in the States and on balance pretty good here. One might have supposed that the film had its fair share of commercial values; but much may perhaps be attributed to Rank's selling of the film on its West End release. Like *Charlie Bubbles* which succeeded it, it was shown at the Odeon, St. Martin's Lane, a theatre committed to a hard ticket, two-a-day policy which was ideally suited to a large 'show' film like *Thoroughly Modern Millie* but less satisfactory for comparatively small-scale pictures like these. Nothing much changes in the industrial side of the film business. Very often the box-office failure of a film ought to be attributed less to inherent quality or to audience taste than to the inability of the exhibition end of the industry to adjust their sales machinery to the specific needs of a specific product.

Once he had been given *The Bofors Gun* Jack Gold found scripts pressed upon him by the dozen. "Eighty per cent of them you wouldn't want to look at. But once you've been offered a picture you exist, and all the people who wouldn't look at you before want you." Almost immediately after finishing *The Bofors Gun* (which took a year from the first proposition to completion) Gold began work on *Matter of Honour*, which is produced by Ronald Shedlo who produced *The Whisperers*. This new film was again written by John McGrath,

adapted from Patrick Hall's novel *The Harp That Once*, and stars Nicol Williamson.

* * *

At 47 David Greene is a rather late arrival. He began his career as an actor, and toured America in 1952 with the Olivier-Leigh *Antony and Cleopatra*. He arrived in Canada just as television was starting up there, and decided he might as well throw in his lot with the rest of the people there, whose inexperience in the medium more or less matched his own. He kicked off with an ambitious production of *Othello*, which at least launched him prestigiously. He stayed in Canada for four years, "winning all the awards". His programme *Flight into Danger* was the first Canadian television show to be screened in this country, where it earned a repeat and a record audience. Moving to the United States, he eventually became the highest paid director on American television. "I had a Rolls-Bentley; my wife had a Cadillac; and one day we stood outside our Spanish-style house, planning a swimming pool. And I said to her, 'Can you hear what we're saying? It's *us* talking.' And we knew it was time to get out." He was in any case fairly frustrated with American television, which he regarded as "simply a great hoax—a series of tricks to keep people watching the commercials." But already past forty he felt rather desperate, certain that it was too late, that he would never make a film. "My wife delivered the worst blow, when she suggested I produce series programmes for television. I knew she thought I'd never make a film either."

Greene consequently took the next film he was offered, which was *The Shattered Room*, made in Britain by an American company with American stars. The film was a gothic horror piece, and the script which he was given was terrible. (A previous director seems already to have given up.) Faced with desperate needs, he simply called in all the scripts and made up the film as he went along, getting up at four in the morning to write each day's dialogue. Not surprisingly the picture was pretty awful, though probably not so bad as it might have been. Highly sensitive to localities ("I like films to be a sort of reportage of the world around the action"), he tried quite seriously to instil some sort of commentary upon the situation of the backward community ("The pylons walked right through this island, and we haven't any electricity") and their understandable resentment of the visitors from outside with their bright, clean clothes and shiny car. Carol Lynley, representative of an antiseptic and alien society, is a defiance to the crude Oliver Reed, who feels continually challenged, sexually and physically, to dirty her up.

With all his efforts, *The Shattered Room* (which cost £180,000) hardly looked like the foundation of a career. The

circumstances of its making do however imply the technical proficiency which is notable in his subsequent films, *Sebastian* and *The Strange Affair*, and had been developed through the years of television work, much of it on filmed series. *Sebastian* was proposed by a producer who already knew Greene and his work from television days. At 1½ million dollars this was the most expensive of his three completed films, and the most satisfying to date, though it has not been an unqualified success with a public which seemed a little bewildered by the wry and equivocal ending to what begins with all the appearances of a conventional espionage drama. Greene's extreme sensitivity to locales shows in his use of the architecture of the new London to create a city almost as exotic as Alphaville. This response to places does not by any means make him a realist. On the contrary he quite deliberately made the glamorised, computerised decoding centre which Sebastian watches over as little as possible like the dingy reality of a government back-room.

Again his technical ease (which has so far never gone facile or mechanical on him) enables him to take advantage of momentary situations, to improvise when necessary. He relates how one of the most admired scenes in *The Strange Affair* was evolved: "I wanted to break away from the conventions of police stories—dark streets and rainy nights and all that. So since the film was really about purity, I made everything bright and white. One scene in the original book called for the police to wait outside a club for the arrival of a protection gangster. I wanted a more up-to-date crime, so settled on drug trading. Drugs are brought in by air, so I wanted to shoot the scene with the police waiting for a suspect to arrive at London Airport. The Airport authorities would not permit us to shoot, so we did the scene at Battersea Heliport. At first we thought of including some models among the passengers, then we decided on a pop group whose fans would add to the confusion and distraction of the scene. Then we decided instead on a Maharishi character, because it involved rather fewer people. Next we had the idea of inventing a new sort of hippie to make up the crowd greeting him off the helicopter, and decided to dress them all in white, as if it were some sort of cult, but also in order to provide a parody of the purity idea. In case it rained on the day, we ordered two hundred white umbrellas, but they looked so nice that we decided the extras should put them up anyhow as a kind of ritual gesture when the Maharishi arrived. And then, during a tea-break, some of the extras left their umbrellas hooked on to a wire fence while they went off; so we decided to put that in too. Which is why you have that shot of the umbrellas all lined up on the fence." Greene works closely with Brian Eatwell, his art director. "He is only 27, and so is plugged in to a generation which I have passed."

The Strange Affair cost \$900,000. Perhaps it is his longer television experience, or his greater age, that makes Greene apparently able to accept more easily the reality of commercial compromise, though he still regrets the changes that were made to the original conception of *The Strange Affair*, which he saw as "a sort of male *Repulsion*. The Jeremy Kemp character in the original was the principal role—a man obsessed with purity. I was persuaded that audiences don't want to see films about the fantasies of forty-year-old detective sergeants; so the Michael York character had to be built up into the main role."

Firmly established as a reliable director, David Greene is full of projects. For United Artists he will produce as well as direct *I Start Counting*, from a novel by Audrey Lindop; and the 4-million-dollar *Dolly Dolly Spy*. He is not awed by the prospect of a big-budget film, simply accepting the fact that different kinds of picture cost different sums of money.

* * *

Ken Loach was launched into feature films on the tremendous reputation largely earned by his production of Nell Dunn's *Up the Junction* for BBC Television. Now 32, he went to the BBC as a trainee in 1963, and did a wide variety of directorial work in the drama department, including *Z-Cars*, Wednesday Plays and *Diary of a Young Man*. Joseph Janni



"WITCHFINDER GENERAL".

asked him to direct a film after seeing *Up the Junction*. There was a year's delay because of Loach's television commitments, and the idea of an adaptation of Nell Dunn's *Poor Cow* was his own. In many ways the film revealed his lack of the specifically cinematic technical background of a Billington, Gold or Greene. Although he experienced the usual bombardment of scripts from producers, he encountered a good deal of difficulty when he attempted to set up another film "without stars or sex or violence." Only with the help of Tony Richardson (who with creditable frequency seems to act the role of fairy godmother to young film-makers) was the project eventually financed.

For United Artists release, *A Kestrel for a Knave* will cost £165,000. Loach deeply regrets the necessity of making it in colour. ("You can't stop colour being pretty... I think people would have taken *Poor Cow* a lot more seriously if it had been done in black and white. As it was they lumped it in with the Swinging Cinema—which I loathe anyway.") He has all the same had freedom to make his new film on location in Barnsley, using a cast of unknown players—mostly artists from the Northern Club circuit. The story is taken from a book by Barry Hines, about a young boy who does not fit easily into the rigidly narrow patterns of our school system, and whose difficulties at school are paralleled with his own experience in training a kestrel hawk. "It just follows

"A KESTREL FOR A KNAVE".



life. It's funny when the lad is funny, and so on." The film will, it seems, be a quite overt criticism of the spiritual poverty of British education, and the whole project seems to reflect Loach's temperament better than did his first film. He is an incorrigible idealist, and sees the only purpose of film and television as the chance to speak directly to ordinary folk. For this reason he would not want to work exclusively in films. He intends to continue working in TV, and deplores the number of directors it is losing to the cinema.

* * *

The work of two other directors recruited from the theatre and TV drama remains to be seen. Anthony Page began his career as a stage director (he was at one time assistant to Lindsay Anderson on some Royal Court productions). Six years ago he enrolled on the BBC's training course, and has alternated stage and television directing since then. He had had several offers before he settled on *Inadmissible Evidence*, which he had directed on the stage both in London and on Broadway. John Osborne adapted his own play, and the film was made for Paramount. The production was not apparently entirely without its difficulties; and on its release in America the notices were mixed. The film has not been released here yet; and again one suspects that the distributors' biggest problem is in selling a picture which does not conform to any of the ordinary commercial tags of sex or violence or comedy.

Waris Hussein has been responsible for some remarkably subtle and sensitive drama productions on television, among them *A Passage to India*, *Maedchen in Uniform*, and two macabre Simon Gray pieces, *Death of a Teddy Bear* and *Sleeping Dog*. He was born in 1938 in Lucknow, where his family are landowners; and he still goes back to India from time to time to maintain his roots there. He came to England in 1947, and was educated here—at Clifton and Queen's, Cambridge—because his father was in government service. From Cambridge he went to do stage design at the Slade, but gave it up as his demands for leave of absence to do occasional stage roles became too frequent. A production of *Caesar and Cleopatra* for the Marlowe Society was brought to the Duchess Theatre and reviewed without the critics being told that it was an amateur company. He thinks that the BBC took him on as a trainee out of pity for his rotten notices.

He has just finished his first feature film, for which he took a six-month leave of absence from the BBC. *The Millstone* is adapted from the novel by Margaret Drabble, whom he knew at Cambridge and who brought him together with the producer when the choice of a director was being considered. His inclinations, as his television work clearly revealed, are towards intimate and quiet analysis of character. His approach is, he says, direct and simple. He seems to be drawn towards the work of lady authors. He is next due to direct *The Neighbour's Wife*, a thirty-minute Edna O'Brien subject for an episode film; and after it, perhaps, Muriel Spark's *The Public Image*.

Albert Finney is an altogether unknown quantity. Elusive and notoriously uncommunicative, his future plans are as unpredictable as was the extraordinary maturity of *Charlie Bubbles*. Reviews of unmixed enthusiasm from both sides of the Atlantic have not saved the film from at best moderate results at the box-office. There can be little doubt that here the trouble was again miscalculated selling techniques.

Memorial Enterprises, the company which Finney directs with Michael Medwin, having just finished Lindsay Anderson's *If...* and planning a film from Bill Naughton's *Spring and Port Wine*, feel their fortunes to be to a great extent bound up with the ebb and flow of American enthusiasm for British films and film-makers. What makes any sort of independent production increasingly difficult is the rising cost of film, the impossibility of making films cheaply by any absolute standards. The costs of production, says Medwin, seem to have gone up by 50 per cent in barely two years. *If...* was made, in colour, for £260,000. It could certainly not be made for that price next year.

One new director—at 24 the youngest of the lot—stands alone, having started off with a high dive into the deep com-

mercial end. It is anybody's guess which way Michael Reeves may go; but his first improbably low budget films for Tigon have revealed an undeniable talent. Movie-mad from childhood, he worked modestly in Hollywood as an assistant director and second unit director, went to Italy to direct a stylish horror picture, *La Sorella di Satana*, and then came back home and took what Tigon had to give him. His first film, *The Sorcerers*, clearly made to order as a cheap, saleable, mildly sensational film, nevertheless had very substantial cinematic qualities. Less bizarre and less exhilarated, his *Witchfinder General* was a remarkable triumph of imagination over small financial resources. Currently he is making *The Oblong Box*.

* * *

Perhaps the era of Britain's swinging cinema was not after all a complete loss, if we can take these nine film-makers (and there may very well be more as yet working in obscurity) as indicating a whole new generation who might very well have found it much harder to establish themselves but for the otherwise misplaced enthusiasms of 1964-67. Most of them have, one way or another, found means to work with a minimum of compromise or pressure, apart from the obvious limitations of budget. (They are inclined to complain too at the difficulties imposed by commercial insistence on colour.) Whether this comparative artistic liberty—in itself a fairly new thing in the English-speaking cinema—will continue as the post-swinging reaction sets in among producers, is hard to tell.

It is especially interesting to see what proportion of talents television is contributing to the cinema, and to recognise that there is television and television. The old assumption that the experience of television direction tends to give directors confidence without the necessary disciplines for film direction needs a certain amount of qualification. It is clear that the sort of intensive experience in film handling that Gold and Billington enjoyed in television is superior to any formal school. At the same time it does seem true that TV drama directors, like stage directors, might well find themselves under-equipped in the other medium. In fact both Anthony Page and Waris Hussein discovered no serious difficulties in the transition; but there have been plenty of less fortunate examples throughout the swinging era.

The tastes and prejudices of these new directors, taken with the films they have made, may afford some prognosis of the British cinema of the next few years. All express a common antipathy for the swinging cinema, and their work in general indicates a strong preference for the 'well-made film' in contrast to the informality of construction and writing until recently in vogue. There is a preference too for quieter, more in-turned subjects, exploring character psychology rather than broad external action. *Charlie Bubbles* and *The Lion in Winter* are two extreme examples of the same tendency.

One feels especially significant the unashamed romanticism of *Interlude* and the unashamed welcome given to it by the public. And here one must look for a parallel reaction in the public itself against the excesses of the swinging cinema, a search for qualities to replace the bare sensation of the past years, which has apparently reached its limit. Already in the Swinging London era one saw, in the comic Kitchener posters and the use of the Union Jack as a potent comic symbol, as well as in the turning back to the thirties and Art Deco, the seeds of nostalgia. Now one senses a more overt assertion of romantic nostalgias for the lost security, the clearer emotions, the defined standards of earlier periods, a craving for heroes in a period when idols tend to be professionally unheroic. With this goes the unmistakable growth of an 'archaist' tendency, reflected as much in the revived popularity of costume pictures (from *A Man for All Seasons* to *Mayerling*) as in the almost global passion for the antique and pseudo-antique (from vintage cars and brass wall telephones to antique supermarkets and revivalist couture). This is not to say that we are necessarily in for a cycle of historical romances; but it does, perhaps, go some way towards indicating the temperature of the winter that must follow the withering of the flags in Carnaby Street.



David Goodis/Dark Passage

ON JANUARY 7, 1967, David Goodis died in Philadelphia where he had lived most of his life. Only one source bothered to print more than a cursory obituary. *The Philadelphia Inquirer*, in a one-column notice, said that Goodis had directed a film titled 'Please Don't Shoot the Piano Player'. The newspaper went on to say that "his best-selling novel, *Cassidy's Girl*, sold over one million copies." But *Cassidy's Girl*, like so much of Goodis' work, was a semi-hack job sold in New York's 42nd Street book stores specialising in hard-core pornography. In a letter to me dated August 16, 1966, David Goodis wrote:

"At first I wanted to write very solemnly and handle only the important issues. But I quickly found that the most important issue was putting food in one's belly, and in order to do that I deviated from the track most of the time and complied with the wishes of the various editors and publishers. I admit this was a weakness. I should have taken a job digging ditches, and because I was too lazy to do that, I threw away a lot of valuable time, especially in Hollywood; although I must say I had a lot of fun in Hollywood."

Before he died, Goodis wrote sixteen published novels, some short fiction, and several screenplays.* All of his work, including *Down There* which Truffaut filmed as *Tirez sur le Pianiste*, is now out of print. There are only two changes which Truffaut made from the novel. The first is the invention of the pianist's younger brother. In the film it is the act of kidnapping the boy which leads to the final act of commitment. The second is that at the end of the film, there is a new waitress at the club, a surrogate for the girl killed by the gangsters. The implication of course is that the pianist may yet again be drawn into a love-relationship. These two changes underscore the fact that the novel is considerably more fatalistic and bleak than the film. The greatness of the Truffaut film is unquestionable, but *Down There* offers the same shifting blend of comedy, pathos, and tragedy. The book, like the film, bursts through the conventions of its genre.

Goodis' first novel, *Retreat from Oblivion*, was published in 1939 when the author was twenty-two years old, a recent graduate of Temple University in Philadelphia. In each work since that time, even in his worst hack jobs, there are moments when his great talent struggles to break through. All of Goodis' novels are set in cities, and his heroes all possess the

wiles and cunning a man of the city needs to survive. All of his major characters are drop-outs, either by choice or circumstance, from society. They are criminals, petty thieves, ghetto dwellers, winos, meth-freaks, bums, addicts, whores. Whether they live in San Francisco, New York, Kingston, or (as most often they do) in Philadelphia, Goodis pays strict attention to topography. He roots the movements of his characters in a ruthless exactitude of place.

The only glimmer of hope in the lives of his characters is the possibility of love. All of his heroes, no matter how degenerate, are blessed (or cursed) with women who try to redeem their lives. Sometimes the attempt at redemption fails (as in *Down There*), and leads instead to a kind of madness. Sometimes (as in *Cassidy's Girl*), it leads to a renewed opportunity. Most often, it is left ambiguous whether or not the love affair will be consummated for more than a transient moment. In *Dark Passage*, a novel which is typical in that it falls midway between the high level of accomplishment of *Down There* and the hack-work of *Cassidy's Girl*, the hero, on the run from the police, asks his lover to meet him in Peru. Whether she will or not is problematical. But always, Goodis asserts that love is the only value in an absurd universe, a world where comedy intrudes in moments of tragedy and disaster lurks beneath the surface in the happiest of times.

Goodis' work anticipated the current vogue for black humour, but there was a touch of Dashiell Hammett and Raymond Chandler in him, and a bit of the 'proletarian writer' of the 1930s. Yet his novels confound classification, which is how it should be. The point is, quite simply, that in a time when a writer's literary stock in the United States seems often to depend on a literary agent and a public relations officer, there was an unheralded artist living alone and destitute and physically ill in Philadelphia. His works gave me pleasure.

WILLIAM DAVID SHERMAN

*His credits: 1947 *THE UNFAITHFUL* (Directed by Vincent Sherman; script by D.G. and James Gunn.)
1947 *DARK PASSAGE* (Directed and scripted by Delmer Daves from the novel by D.G.)
1956 *NIGHTFALL* (Directed by Jacques Tourneur; scripted by Stirling Silliphant from D.G.'s novel.)
1957 *THE BURGLAR* (Directed by Paul Wendkos; scripted by D.G. from his own novel.)

FILM REVIEWS

IF...

LINDSAY ANDERSON THINKS "*If...* is really a vision, something like the Writing on the Wall." We should therefore look for something prophetic, cryptic, poetic, transforming. Anderson and his skilful screenwriter David Sherwin have certainly written something on the wall, but a good deal of rubbing out's been going on and, in some really crucial places, parts of the wall seem to be missing.

No one in the cinema has ever done such an effective hatchet-job on the English Public School. In *If...* (Paramount) Anderson and Sherwin expose its horrors wittily and savagely: the brutality, the exploitation of slave labour, the tyranny of petty restrictions, the sexual confusion and hypocrisy, the interdependence of hierarchy and conformity. The boys are screened for bodily and spiritual health by a gauntlet of prefects and staff. "Ringworm? Eye-disease? VD? Confirmation class? Next!" Nice jokes like this are frequent and accurate. More telling are the signs of community values: heaps of academic books and papers the boys have not been allowed to take into divine service, shed, like shameful secrets, at the chapel door.

All this is well and carefully done. But there is more. The legacy of Kipling first of all. Anderson was born in India, of Scottish extraction. The legend of service with honour is for him a giant lie, since it is a life inevitably corrupted by the system of government it upholds. However benevolent it is, Anderson will have no time for paternalism. And Kipling would not recognise Mick, the hero of this new *If...*, as an Englishman at all. Anderson talks of him as "someone who arrives at his own beliefs, and who stands up for them, even against the world. It's the kind of character that can only be played by someone who knows what it's all about." But then there must be many a colonial administrator, honourable men, long gone, who would have recognised themselves in that description. So bitter is Anderson's vision that there is not one single member of the staff, no single senior prefect, who even remotely enjoys the comfort of a clear conscience.

The headmaster is a glib power-politician, alerting the prefects to the challenge of the

future and intending to introduce a course in business management; the chaplain, a crushing portrait of religious opportunism, jingoism and snobbery, in class cuffing heads and fondling breasts, in chapel congratulating God on preferring the middle classes; the housemaster a weak figurehead allowing his vicious and corrupt prefects to 'nip unruly elements in the bud'; which they do, provoking armed revolt by the hero and his friends. For the latter, the revolutionaries, rebellion at school is an ascetic test, an emotional release, and a witness to their solidarity with the third world.

The sides, in other words, are pretty neatly drawn up. All the more reason then why we must look very hard at the credentials of our new leader. He 'knows what it's all about'. What what's all about? It's not the Jews this time, or the RC's, or the vegetarians, but it is a sort of conspiracy theory nonetheless. The 'it' is 'them' and they're against 'us'. But of course they are, and the justice of what Anderson's saying and the sincerity and passion with which he says it are truly painful. What's more, the tenacity of his stand against them over the years is truly admirable.

But it's a local justice, not an absolute one, and its applications must be constantly defined and made precise, otherwise all the passion and sincerity and tenacity in the world will only confuse his sympathisers and—more importantly—his work. 'It all', 'them' and 'us' are inadequate descriptions of the elements involved in the

coming revolutionary struggle, and the film doesn't do enough to clarify them.

If there is going to be one then, by God, we need to know what it's going to be about. But that's just the trouble. Is this a prophetic warning or a rallying cry? And are we part of the sheepish congregation whom Anderson's youthful cohorts will mow down as we run for cover, the soft bourgeois centre of England? We simply shudder at the thought. Or are we the gullible young, misled by that unholy alliance of jingoism and commercialism which he believes has hardly changed in a century? (In that case do we get mown down too? Though many a gilt-edged consol and many a flowered hat fall at the final onslaught, we see none of the fellow-pupils machine-gunned.) Or perhaps we're up on the roof behind the gatling? In that case, we want to know what kind of new society it is that we're fighting for. Since only Mick and his shattering gun—seemingly turned on us—is the final image, we shall have to look backwards into the film for a more rational outline of his platform.

Mick and his two friends Johnny and Wallace are loafing about the study, Mick talking about violence and revolution, Wallace complaining about his pimples, Johnny dreaming about sex. Later in the gym, in a heroic pastiche, they fence, and one of them is hurt. He is amazed to see real blood. Later still, surrounded by images of violence and oppression on the study walls, they mingle blood in a gesture



"If..." ANTHONY NICHOLLS UP IN ARMS FOR THE ESTABLISHMENT.



"FINIAN'S RAINBOW": PETULA CLARK, FRED ASTAIRE.

of solidarity. Mick and Johnny escape into the town and to the bourgeois tokens of consumer sexuality—the nylons and the motorbikes—they oppose their own fake fight and 'death'. Violence it seems, surprisingly, is necessary. Mick and Johnny turn the motorbike into a tool of revolution: they steal it, and on this black charger ride to the rescue of the lady in the tower—in this case a waitress at a transport café. To the accompaniment of the Missa Luba Mick and the girl recreate primitive society, make love on the floor of the café and afterwards circle in a slow and triumphant love dance on the bike. The regenerative links are forged. Nothing remains but the provocation that will spark the revolutionaries into the necessary brutal action.

So far so good, surely. Why can one not hail this brave and unusual essay in personal cinema as a masterpiece? Why can't we read the writing on the wall? We said we might look, in a vision, for something poetic. Isn't this it?

Anderson has shown himself in all his work eager to break the narrow bounds of documentary realism. A strain of expressionism was evident in *This Sporting Life* and surrealism frequently punctures the Jennings-like surface of *The White Bus*. (Or perhaps it would be more accurate to put it the other way round?) At moments in *If...* this delicate skirmishing on the borders of realism is apt and tender, as when Bobby Phillips watches his hero Wallace exercising in the gym; or striking and uncanny, as when the housemaster's wife drifts naked through the deserted dorm, caressing towels and clothing; and there is a fine scene when Phillips, young and much desired, at one of his morning tasks, shaves the puritanically repressed prefect Denson while Denson lies in bed. This image seems to crystallise the combination of tenderness and horrified fury which is Anderson's special note. But whether out of a need to suppress the tenderness, or an impatience to express the fury, these moments and this balance are lost in the headlong drive to the end.

If the account of the school's horrors scores by its patient accuracy, it does it no service now to explode these strict terms of reference. The love-making on the floor of the café: is it Mick or Anderson himself who can no longer contemplate any action, even love, except as an expression of violence? And is this mythical mating of lion and tigress only a rough and feral substitute for the true tender violence of blood brothers? Now no voice seems his own. In his quotations from Vigo—indeed in his wholesale appropriation of scenes from Vigo—Anderson reflects a fascination with that majestic blend of anarchy and surrealism. And at other times, in the violence of his solutions, he seems to be nearer to Godard. All the time, despite this, his real gifts as an observer are those of the British documentarists: Jennings, Grierson, Wright, but without their sentimentality or preciousness.

These are the gifts he ignores in the final whirlwind of styles. Vigo was a surrealist who was careful not to make a documentary about schools or barges, nor did he have a revolutionary solution to propose. Godard is so serious about the revolution that he will not avoid shooting schoolboys, but he has no time for chaplains in the cupboard. It is a question of targets. *If...* is a film concerned with revolution, but about anger. And if we can't read the writing on the wall, perhaps it was because the hand shook a little.

GAVIN MILLAR

FINIAN'S RAINBOW

ANYONE WHO REFUSED to abandon himself to the pleasure pure and simple of such films as *French Cancan* or *Silk Stockings* had better give *Finian's Rainbow* (Warner-Pathé) a miss. Like Renoir with his rosily moonlit *Butte de Montmartre*, or Mamoulian with his Paris which loves lovers, Francis Ford Coppola has created a

dream world, half-fact, half-fantasy, and all enchantment: a rural paradise reached by way of the Brooklyn Bridge, Mount Rushmore and the Mississippi riverboats, but unquestionably at the end of the rainbow in a never-never America where true love and simple faith conquer all obstacles.

Schmaltz? Well, you can either echo Coppola's own defiant "I like schmaltz," or save the day like Fred Astaire by muttering "It's that cheap Irish music" as you (and he) crossly brush away a furtive tear while listening to the charmingly sentimental song of Glocca Morra. But the point is that *Finian's Rainbow* is all of a piece, and like all the best musicals, transmits its feelings not by words or even deeds, but by movement. And the movement of the film is pure exhilaration, without trace of schmaltz or whimsy. Consider, for instance, the conversion of the segregationist senator (Keenan Wynn) to human brotherhood after he has inadvertently been turned into a Negro. No emoting, no speechifying; simply a shot of the black-avised senator singing 'O dem Golden Slippers' as he strides briskly down the open road towards his encounter with the Hot Gospellers, and the take-off into soaring liberty as their car zooms along the highways in the 'Begin the Begat' number.

Movement, in fact, is quintessential to *Finian's Rainbow* (which is as it should be), not only in the musical numbers but in the whole structure of the film. Somehow Coppola manages to give the impression that his characters are not merely involved by ones, twos and threes in individual songs and dances, but are all caught up in one vast, informal musical number which is the film itself. His secret seems to lie partly in the way he choreographs the action beyond the limits of the frame, and partly in the impeccable rhythms of his curiously fragmented technique.

This sense that the action extends beyond the frame (or beyond a particular setting), for instance, is brilliantly instanced early on in the film by the 'Woody's Here' number, which serves chiefly to establish the villagers in their battle against the sheriff and his writ of foreclosure, but also opens out to herald the arrival of Finian and his daughter Sharon (a shot of the sheriff's car passing them on the way to Rainbow Valley), as well as the return of Woody with the money (his train is seen passing Finian and Sharon). The action, thus centred on the sheriff and protesting villagers, with tentacles stretching out to Woody and to Finian and Sharon, is brought superbly full circle when Finian and Sharon finally do arrive, to find the village empty but the soundtrack revealing that they have all gone to the railway station to meet Woody and are now triumphantly returning.

This three-dimensional trick is used repeatedly throughout the film, nowhere more effectively than in the unbroken flow of action which links the 'Something Sort of Grandish' number to the picnic and 'If This Isn't Love', meanwhile sweeping up the entire village into its cross-currents. As Og and Sharon end their celebration of spring-fever ('Something Grandish'), Og floats away on the ballooning dress, past the forest where Susan the Silent sits dreaming in a tree, and disappears into the well where Woody has come to talk to Sharon; she goes angrily indoors just as the children march past singing, 'We're having a Party'; Finian emerges to console Woody, and they follow the children to the fields where Susan emerges from the forest to dance

her 'I've Got a Secret'; and suddenly the whole picnic explodes into 'If This Isn't Love'. The whole sequence has that effortless choreographic flow and overall rhythm that hasn't been seen in the cinema since *Summer Holiday* and *Silk Stockings*—and allows one to hope that Coppola can and will take over the Mamoulia mantle.

Unlike every other recent musical, from *My Fair Lady* to *Star! Finian's Rainbow* has in effect no set pieces (with the possible exception of Fred Astaire's solo in the barn, a charming adagio version of the 'Ritz Roll'n'Rock' from *Silk Stockings*) where the characters suddenly turn into singers and dancers for highly polished routines wedged uncomfortably between stretches of mundane exposition. Here the numbers are the plot, and have a boundless and fancy-free spontaneity not only because they spring naturally out of the action (e.g. the way 'Woody's Here' and 'Come-and-Get-It Day' are orchestrations of the dialogue, or 'Something Grandish' is



"FINIAN'S RAINBOW": BARBARA HANCOCK, ASTAIRE.

occasioned by coltish impulses in Og and Sharon), but because they are shaped by the needs of the action rather than of the choreographer.

Hermes Pan has created some splendid figures and routines for his dancers, but they are used, in that curiously fragmented manner I mentioned earlier, to create a whole which is very different from the sum of its parts. When Finian celebrates his becoming a member of the village cooperative with an Irish jig under the old oak tree, then carries the dance with him up the hill to his new home, followed by villagers who inject some joyous *West Side Story* athletics in square dance formation, there is no confusion or clashing of styles because everybody, one feels, is doing what comes naturally.

As Godard once remarked of *The Pajama Game*, they are not dancing because they are dancers, but because they feel the need to; and *Finian's Rainbow* is above all a demonstration of the naturalness of the musical as a means of expression, with barely an interior visible throughout the entire film, with dancers pounding rough

grass and muddy earth instead of carefully prepared surfaces, and with singers actually experiencing the emotions they celebrate ('Old Devil Moon', in particular, brilliantly shot in the melting, dappled glow of forest moonlight, has a rare awareness of eroticism, with Petula Clark edging warily away from the glance which "Makes this romance/Too hot to handle").

It isn't easy to describe how Coppola's method works without going into a shot-by-shot analysis; but the most noticeable thing is the way each sequence is fragmented into tiny pieces, always cut unerringly on movement, and the disparate elements reassembled into a perfect choreographic whole. The effect is not at all the same as the niggling mathematical equations of, say, *Oliver!*, but one of absolute, untrammelled freedom. One could almost swear, for instance, that 'Something Grandish', with Tommy Steele and Petula Clark swirling through the washing-lines or careering downhill with a sheet billowing between them, had really been shot in one glorious, serpentine elegant, Max Ophüls crane shot. Which is perhaps simply another way of saying that *Finian's Rainbow* is a stunning piece of cinema. I loved every minute of it.

TOM MILNE

THE LION IN WINTER

HOT ON THE HEELS of a line of modern dramatists (Eliot, Anouilh, Fry) American playwright James Goldman presents his portrait of Henry II in *The Lion in Winter* (Avco Embassy). This is a sub-Shavian conversation piece which puts its 12th century figures into a contemporary domestic situation, endows them with historical hindsight, and sets in motion a series of permutations on family faithlessness. The Broadway production seems to have been rather a romp, and one can see that the text would lend itself to this kind of treatment if only because it lacks the vital core of Shaw's historical comedies, the argument. Goldman's wordy play is rich in wit and strong enough in characterisation, but it lacks ideas. Consequently there is a real danger of monotony as Henry and his queen wrangle and scheme with their unlovely brood over provinces and principalities. The only real issue is the succession, and it is obvious from the start that this will never be settled while Henry is alive.

The achievement of Anthony Harvey's film is that it not only makes an exciting visual experience of this essentially stogy material, but generates enough emotion to make it seem relevant to the real problems of its historical personages, at least for a couple of hours in the cinema. The film opens as Henry is training his pampered youngest son John in swordsmanship. Henry, at fifty, is tough, hard and athletic; seen in close-up, his bared teeth and gleaming eyes show his relish of the fight. John, a plump and pimply boy, spars with more spite than skill, and is dismissed to practice as the scene widens to reveal the lush autumnal landscape with Henry's mistress, Alais, sister of the King of France, presiding over a picnic. There is a glimpse of a peasant working in the tiny square fields that immediately evokes the illuminations in an old book of hours.

Henry decides to hold a Christmas court at his castle of Chinon, and dispatches a messenger to fetch his sons Richard and

Geoffrey and his queen, Eleanor of Aquitaine, now sixty-one and immured for ten years in Salisbury Tower. Richard (the future Coeur de Lion) is discovered in a characteristically violent moment as he prepares to dispatch his opponent in the lists. His brother Geoffrey sits on a cliff top playing God as he signals an ambush to horsemen on the beach below. (The apparently empty sandy cove is revealed in a marvellous swinging crane shot, with a sudden swooping zoom to disclose Geoffrey on the cliff.) Eleanor is found serenely sewing in her prison—a figure of vibrant, ageless beauty. She senses the messenger's purpose before he has a chance to speak. The arrival of these three and of young King Philip of France at Chinon, a fairy-tale castle from without and a bustling, dirty miniature town within, brings more visual splendour. Eleanor, especially, as she appears on the slowly moving Royal Barge drifting round a bend in the river, wonderfully combines regal dignity with exuberance.

And so, the scene being set, the action must begin; and most of the director's and writer's ingenuity (Goldman adapted his own play) is now devoted to disguising the fact that there is none. But there is no disguising the stylistic dichotomy in the dialogue. Cutting history down to size and reducing Kings and Queens to the level of the brawling couple next door ("Hush, dear, Mother's fighting") may work very well, but not if they are also to be allowed to express a rage as monumental as that which has turned Eleanor's love to hatred. Conversely, if she is to be granted this stature, to follow a scene of searing bitterness in which she taunts the king with her knowledge of his father's body by a bathetic aside, "Well, what family doesn't have its ups and downs," is merely to risk undercutting an effect for a laugh.

Fortunately Harvey's tactful direction of his players has minimised the effect of the confusion. He has drawn one of her best-ever performances from Katharine Hepburn, in whose Eleanor malice has been so long polished and refined that she seems to glow with it, like burnished bronze. The agony of rejection from which it springs is perfectly expressed in the little soliloquy when she looks at her ravaged beauty in a primitive mirror and murmurs, "My, what a lovely girl. How could her king have left her?" But most of the time she is fighting and arguing, that harsh, strident voice lashing all about her, but most of all, her king.

Christopher Fry once said of Henry II, "It is difficult to think of any facet of man which at some time he didn't demonstrate, except chastity and sloth." And Peter O'Toole's Henry, much more disciplined than his earlier portrayal in *Becket*, manages to suggest not only the brawling fighter, but, without much help from the text, the king who was a law-giver and reformer, the man of action and intellect. Above all, he is capable of standing up to Hepburn's Eleanor and making her lifelong adoration seem neither unlikely nor unreasonable.

They are supported by performances of subtlety and skill from newcomers Tim Dalton as Philip of France and John Castle as Geoffrey. And Jane Merrow makes a human being out of the underwritten part of Alais. Anthony Harvey has said "To me the interesting thing about films are faces and people." In *The Lion in Winter* he has made memorable half a dozen faces and given them identities which, though they may not match historical reality, will linger in the imagination.

BRENDA DAVIES

BULLITT

THE SLOGAN WOULD AGAIN appear to be Go West Young Man. Almost every month, it seems, some striking new 'first' film from the other side of the Atlantic comes from a director who has achieved only modest or intermittent success in Britain. *Bullitt* (Warner-Pathé) may not have quite the impact of *Point Blank*, but it is a highly creditable effort as a relatively young English director's first American film. Indeed, even from a native American the sense of involvement in the milieu and the environment would have been remarkable, and despite the apparently unhelpful background of RADA and provincial repertory, Peter Yates also appears to have assimilated that special brand of violence which most Europeans think of as specifically American. And perhaps because not a native Californian, he has also succeeded in presenting a picture of that Mecca of the new movie-makers, San Francisco, which is at once fresh and believable.

Basically, *Bullitt* is a well-made but fairly conventional and slightly overlong film about the duel between an incorruptible policeman and a politically ambitious district attorney for possession of the key prosecution witness in a racket-busting hearing. (The politician wants him alive, the policeman is perhaps less concerned either way.) What distinguishes it from many of its kind is the vivid sense of background, and of life going on all around. Since both star and director have professional motor-racing experience—and a car chase was the high spot of Yates's previous film, *Robbery*—it is perhaps not surprising that the long car chase in *Bullitt* is among the most exciting ever filmed. Similarly, the initial shotgun slaying of the supposed witness in the run-down hotel is perhaps the most violent screen killing since one character was literally blasted out of his boots in *The Left-handed Gun*.

But Yates's greatest success is with the sequences at the hospital and at San Francisco airport. In the intensive-care unit to which the dying witness and his badly injured police bodyguard are taken, and where a bitter three-cornered battle of wits is waged between the detective, the suave politician and the grey-haired professional killer bent on completing a bungled contract, one is vividly aware of the normal hospital routine proceeding all around. Rarely have blood-drips and all the frightening impedimenta of modern surgery been put to more dramatic or seemingly casual use or the audience been made so aware of the very smells of a surgical ward. And the final sequences at the airport convey both the bustle and feel of muted expectancy common to the concourses of all great airports, and the beauty of the great jets manoeuvring by night on the runways among which *Bullitt* and his prey play out the last deadly game of hide-and-seek. Throughout, the director's controlled and economical use of violence (presumably responsible for the slightly surprising A Certificate) is equalled by the sureness with which he conveys the atmosphere of violence about to erupt, especially in crowded public places. There is one shot of a closed door about to burst open to permit bloody murder which is frightening in the intensity it engenders.

One's considerable admiration for the direction and editing, and for William

Fraker's colour camerawork, makes it easy to overlook the achievement of the cast. But Steve McQueen, all terrier-like determination and obstinacy, makes a convincing *Bullitt*. Jacqueline Bisset turns in a crisp and efficient performance as his worried girlfriend, and Robert Vaughn as Chalmers, the opportunist exponent of gracious living who exits beaten but not really defeated, calmly opening his *Wall Street Journal* in his chauffeur-driven limousine, is convincingly nasty. All in all a rewarding addition to one of the most popular of American genres, and a credit to all concerned.

JACK IBBERTSON

BLACK ON WHITE

SINCE SIGNING OFF as a regular film critic in 1963—with a piece entitled 'Tired of Films'—Jörn Donner has made on average one film per year. Reactions have varied from hostility to restrained admiration; the feeling being that Donner has somehow not found his own voice. Inevitably, then, *Black on White* (Amanda) will raise expectations. In the first place, it was both made and produced in the director's native Finland—all his previous features have been Swedish productions. Just how important this homecoming must have been can be judged from an article published in *SIGHT AND SOUND* two years ago, in which he confessed: "I've found it difficult to show what I wanted since my unfamiliarity with Swedish people and the Swedish environment is total."

On reflection, this seems an important clue to the themes of the earlier films. In *To Love*, for instance, the sense of unease finds expression in the flickering intensity of the relationship between Cybulski and Harriet Andersson: often confined to one room, the film abounds in images of confinement and isolation. Here the refusal to come to terms with exile is no more than hinted at by

ironic vignettes of Swedish middle-class life and by Cybulski's job as a travel agent. But in *Adventure Starts Here*, Donner explicitly dramatises his involvement with Finland. The Helsinki locations have an air of rediscovery, delicately counterpointing the (symbolic?) liaison between a Finnish architect and a Swedish fashion director.

Now, with *Black on White*, he is firmly back on native soil, with his own production company to ensure future all-Finnish films. At the same time he has assumed control of the film to a remarkable degree, having not only written and directed it, but also edited, partly produced and played the main part.

At first sight, the result may seem disappointing. Certainly the film does little to ingratiate: Donner himself describes it as "a cheap and vulgar, yet interesting story." Depends, of course, what you find interesting. Among the credits, we are introduced to the Holm family, with regulation two children and two cars, which has been chosen by a magazine as the ideal family unit. Thereafter, we join Juha Holm, refrigerator sales executive, impulsively embarking on an affair with a provocative girl from the office. The girl, at first flattered by his attentions, soon begins to calculate and, having acquired a flat and a career as a photographic model, coolly disengages. Meanwhile, Juha's 'ideal' marriage has collapsed under the strain of too many late nights at the office and hasty excuses. The film ends, as it began, with an ironic juxtaposition of public and private: trying to meet the girl after she has finally given him the brush off, Juha follows her across a wasteground, on which a vast hoarding featuring the girl in a refrigerator ad. advises 'Keep cool'.

Possible expressions of disappointment are that in his acting and direction Donner has failed to keep sufficient tension, or distance from his material; that the banality of the triangle situation is exacerbated by its highly elliptical treatment, showing little or no development of the wife's disenchantment; that the visual style (in vivid Eastman Colour) is over-decorative and evasive. Such

JORN DONNER (RIGHT) IN "BLACK ON WHITE"



views are worth mentioning because they have been voiced in some quarters, and because they collectively imply that Donner's aim was to make a psychological drama. As such, however, *Black on White* would be far from satisfactory or interesting.

Once more *To Love* is illuminating. In it, Cybulski, the coolest of philanderers, gradually finds himself drawn into a relationship with the widowed Harriet Andersson, which he can only cope with emotionally by proposing marriage—by which stage the widow has regained her taste for freedom to the extent of saying No (initially, at any rate), while wanting to continue the affair. *Black on White* takes this interest in the initiative of decision rather further. Juha Holm begins his affair on impulse, has a number of opportunities to back out before committing himself, but continues. Later, he insists that the girl, Maria, 'choose' between him and a handsome young executive with whom she's been flirting: she stays with Juha, but resents his melodramatic manner. Again, when Maria petulantly reminds him of the promised divorce, he stalls with talk of responsibilities and the 'right time'. But when his wife has gone and he's able to offer divorce followed by marriage, the girl is no longer interested. The important and interesting feature of this complex pattern is that throughout we are never given any of the characters' reasons for their decisions and actions. Instead, we watch the steady accumulation of events—e.g. Juha creeping into the marital bed night after night—which will, at a certain point, tip the balance.

The avoidance of psychological probing and 'explanation', visual or verbal, of motives suggests that what Donner found interesting in his 'cheap and vulgar' story was the opportunity to create a kind of micro-structure of sharply observed poses, mannerisms, gestures. These are what one remembers most vividly—Juha's mother-in-law, seen only for a few seconds, the senior executive with dark glasses—together with the changes of perspective, signalled by filters and abrupt camera movements. By returning to the country and people that he knows intimately enough to compose, Donner has succeeded in fulfilling his own maxim: "... avoid psychoanalysis. A film should show actions. Don't explain everything. Tell a story."

IAN L. CHRISTIE

THE FIREMEN'S BALL

WHEN SOME CZECH firemen complained after seeing *The Firemen's Ball* (Gala) that they had been misrepresented, Milos Forman told them that actually the film wasn't about firemen. And it's certainly possible to read it as an elaborately constructed allegory about pre-Dubcek Czechoslovakia: the firemen's ball as a microcosm of the state, where holding a ticket for the tombola won't necessarily get you one of the prizes, because someone behind the scenes has been quietly appropriating them. The crux of the film would then be a fireman's remark about the prestige of the brigade being more important than his personal honesty.

But the political metaphor is an afterthought. Watching the film one is reminded again and again that Forman's main concern is with the foibles of human nature. He has said that he is only interested in making films about the young and the old

because the middle-aged can look after themselves. In *Peter and Pavla* and *A Blonde in Love* the focus was firmly fixed on the young and their confused gropings towards self-awareness; the father's bewilderment at the end of the first film was frozen in time, but the real bewilderment belonged to the boy who prompted his exasperation. In this film most of the firemen are middle-aged, and it is their follies which Forman's inquisitive, mocking camera fixes on. But though they make a terrible mess of their ball, they can always pick up the pieces and begin to argue about next year's event; the real victims of the disaster are two old men who haven't the resilience to go on making fools of themselves.

As in his earlier films, Forman zigzags his way through closely observed, amiably confused comic detail before pulling us back sharply with a perfectly timed shift of mood. At the end of *A Blonde in Love* we assume that the girl is laughing as she listens at the door to the boy's quarrel with his parents, until the camera moves in to reveal that she is actually weeping. Here the method is basically the same, except that the key changes more frequently and the final note is almost one of bitterness. The air of imminent disaster is cunningly established. Two members of the firemen's organising committee, one perched on a tottering ladder, argue about who does what; another member, appointed to watch the slowly disappearing prizes, indignantly berates a formidable woman who just as indignantly insists that she has had her eyes glued on the table. A group of firemen pull in potential beauty queens by crawling round the crowded hall on their hands and knees, then lose the list of contestants, and finally sit glumly poring over a magazine photograph of a similar competition and wondering what to do with their unlikely lot, one of whom enters into the spirit of the thing by running home to don a somewhat unbecoming bikini. Forman encourages us to laugh at the firemen, but the laughter is always slightly uneasy, and not just because one suspects that these non-professional actors are being deployed in ways they might not have been aware of. We are invited to be voyeurs of their petty squabbles, their displays of self-assertion, their blundering determination; but their embarrassment is also ours because it is all too familiar.

Comes the moment of truth, and the beauty queens take to their heels and the safety of the ladies' room. By now all is chaos, but just as we are getting a bit complacent about these poor provincial firemen, Forman picks a face out of the confusion which turns the joke on us. One of the beauty queens, plump and flushed, is left forlornly on the platform; the band strikes up and the brigade's retiring president, having valiantly held his seat throughout the proceedings, marches forward with touching dignity to receive his presentation golden hatchet, only to be ushered back to his place because the music is not for him and he will have to hold on a little longer. Later, when the ball is over, he gracefully accepts the presentation in a deserted hall, makes a speech of thanks, and opens the box to find that someone has run off with the hatchet.

The salt is really rubbed in the wound with the fire which brings the ball to an end. An old man, rescued in his nightclothes, is put on one of his own chairs, which someone then turns round to face the burning house in case he catches cold; meanwhile the enterprising barman borrows one of his

tables and starts serving drinks to the spectators. But things aren't all bad: Grandpa is invited back to the ball, there is a hasty collection of tombola tickets, a halting speech—and then, final cruel twist, he is presented with a box of tickets for which there are now, of course, no prizes. Bewildered, he stumbles out into the night to his bed, incongruously anchored in the snow, pulls back the blankets, and resignedly climbs in alongside the fireman assigned to keep an eye on his salvaged possessions. The house, once blazing orange, is now charred black against the whiteness of the snow. It would be an image of utter despair if one didn't know from the rest of the film that for all his ruthless exposé of human folly, Forman's vision of humanity is essentially one of compassion.

DAVID WILSON

BARBARELLA

JEAN-CLAUDE FOREST's *Barbarella* changes colour from chapter to chapter in a strange way; also the drawing of her features is a bit erratic, so that sometimes she has a Stryberg-like horsiness, sometimes a Bardot-like pussiness. At any rate, she was obviously a Vadim girl from the beginning, and there is rightness in her incarnation in Jane Fonda. Forest's strip (published here by Transworld) limps a bit; so does the film, to be honest, but there is a real fascination in its basic idea, which is a happy belief in the survival of sexuality, previously expressed in that scene on the beach in *Et Dieu Créa la Femme*, for example, or in the ruined church at the end of *Warrior's Rest*, but now triumphantly crashing through the barriers of space.

The future people of the earth make love by means of an exaltation-transference pill and by placing the palms of their right hands together; but across the galaxies, on the planet Lythion, the old way is still preferred. The universe has been pacified and hygienic for centuries, but in Sogo, city of night, where the Black Queen rules her kingdom of sadists and prostitutes, a new perversion is invented every day; and another refugee from Earth, the scientist Durand-Durand, is preparing to disturb the peace with his Positronic Ray.

The credits list eight names for the adaptation, including that of Terry Southern. Occasionally it seems to me to miss something in Forest (the see-through man in the labyrinth is said in the original to be suffering from 'perforated leprosy'). Sometimes it simply transposes (*Barbarella*'s 'A good many dramatic situations begin with screaming'), but more usually it improves. I'm sorry that there wasn't room for the robot, who after a night with *Barbarella* apologises for being a bit mechanical in his movements, but his absence is more than compensated for by the invention of Pygar's sleeping quarters: where else would an angel sleep but in a nest? The horrid mechanical dolls are a good deal horrid on the screen, the Black Queen more formidable, the labyrinth more imaginative, David Hemmings' characterisation as a bumbling revolutionary funnier than the tragic Captain Sun of the original.

Vadim and the designer, Mario Garbuglia, have been rightly literal-minded in approaching Forest's strange world of vegetable and animal shapes, weird mutants and soft machines: *Barbarella* is towed



"THE FIREMEN'S BALL"

across the ice by a giant sting-ray, the Catch Man who rescues her takes her off in an ice-ship which looks like a species of huge moth, the excessive machine in which Durand-Durand tries to make Barbarella die from pleasure is part Wurlitzer, part carnivorous plant. It's a dress designer's field day as well: the group of ladies at pleasure towards the end of the film, lying about on cushions and smoking Essence of Man while others less fortunate than themselves are being toasted overhead, could have strayed off the set of *Giulietta degli Spiriti*, and probably did. On the other hand, the Chamber of Dreams, in which Barbarella finds herself caught up in the Black Queen's nightmares, comes straight from the original: the idea fascinates, but the execution somehow disappoints (how often one has to say that about Vadim). The need to be faithful to the original and the perfectly correct concentration on detail interfere with the pace of the film, which generally lacks drive and rhythm.

There are signs, though, that Vadim is chiefly interested in *Barbarella* (Paramount) as a kind of parable. Barbarella's innocence preserves her from the Mathmos, the pulpy mass beneath Sogo which feeds on evil; she is innocent because she has no sense of guilt. The Mathmos also rejects Pygar, who rises from the holocaust at the end clutching Barbarella with one arm, the Black Queen with the other: an angel has no memory, and moreover Pygar is blind. The labyrinth is inhabited by ghosts, by people who are slowly turning into stone; they are the virtuous, ejected from the City of Night, condemned to an eternity of palaeontological sorrow. It is perhaps a film to be read, rather than looked at. Notwithstanding the inventiveness of the decors and the richness of Claude Renoir's photography, it remains small-scale, almost casual, as if it were a kind of shorthand for something else, something more abstract and earnest. In spite of the come-on pictures of Jane Fonda in the glossies, maybe it's a minority interest after all.

JAMES PRICE

THE WILD ANGELS and THE TRIP

IT'S NOW TEN YEARS since Dick Miller accidentally stuck a knife through the cat in his bedroom wall and converted the result into an indignant statuette. That was in Roger Corman's *Bucket of Blood*, a taut, modest and uneven curio built around the theme of a misfit whose enemies all get encased in plaster to further the cause of art. It seems a comparatively low rung on the ladder Corman has since briskly ascended to his present big-budget elevation, but it is a significant one. For within a few months of completing *Bucket of Blood* Corman was preparing *The Fall of the House of Usher*, and cats in walls, uncontrolled eccentrics, and corpses on permanent display dominated the films he made—around twenty of them—during the next five years.

That these are traditional horror elements has of necessity made Corman himself a difficult director to sum up; it hasn't really been possible to decide what was genuine Corman and what was rearranged Edgar Allan Poe, although the rearrangement provided plenty of clues. And while the profitable cycle was being worked out this hasn't mattered too much—there has been more than enough to celebrate in Corman's technique alone as it ascended, film by film, to the elaborate ritual of *Masque of the Red Death*. When he came up with the sharp and confusing contrasts of a war film, a study of motor-cycle hoodlums, a reconstruction of the Al Capone period and a piece on drug-taking, it seemed that technique was indeed the sole interest of Corman the film-maker, and that having extracted every possible variation from Vincent Price's by no means unlimited range he was moving on to other proved methods of meeting box-office demands.

As it turns out, the censorship delays

that have kept Britain from seeing *The Wild Angels* and *The Trip* until the 1968 Edinburgh Festival (both films, acquired by Cinecitta for distribution, are still banned by the censor) have deprived us to a startling extent of the opportunity of getting Corman into perspective. For instead of being the expected break with the wistful dream-world of *Ligeia* they both refer back repeatedly to the preoccupations of the Poe films, serving with an irrefutable clarity to expand, to augment, and to integrate these into the contemporary setting where fundamentally, of course, they have belonged all along. The cats seem to have taken their leave (discounting those on motor-cycles), but the eccentrics and the walking dead are so prominent that to ignore them would be like trying to deny Bergman his grease-paint, Buñuel his clerics, and Resnais his memory.

On the other hand, the exciting thing about both films, which themselves link together in a number of ways almost as an independent unit, is that far from being retrospective and derivative they lead the technical as well as the thematic Corman forward—many of their sequences embody the best work he has done. In abandoning, only temporarily one hopes, Daniel Haller's splendid array of cobwebbed dungeons, Corman has discovered the intoxicating delights of location photography, not just in the sense of colour and landscape but also in terms of people. The greatest difference between *Bucket of Blood* and *Wild Angels*, both written by Charles B. Griffith, is that while in the former the cast declaims somewhat self-consciously in overcrowded and oppressive studio sets, the latter puts its characters out on the open road and contemplates them expansively from enormous distances—with the result that their movements are more relaxed, their words more spontaneous.

Not that *Wild Angels* is a particularly realistic film—ritualistic would be a better term. Embedded in its surface is all the jargon that has become automatically associated with the anti-social motor-

cyclist since his personification by Brando and his deification by Warhol and Anger: the Nazi insignia, the inarticulate drawl, the bursts of petty violence, the glittering, growling machines, the shapelessly pounding beat music that accompanies each patrol along the streets. In such respects, *Wild Angels* is just what one would anticipate, a reasonably detached study of a collection of bizarre and repellent hooligans intent on justifying to the full the image that conventional society has dreamed up for them. In that their leader ultimately sees the error of his ways, one can even produce the standard 'defence' for Corman's temerity in shocking us with casual rapes and desecrations by saying that of course he is revealing the basic emptiness of the gang's lives, and that no youngsters are going to be tempted into such activities by this harrowing spectacle. True as far as it goes, but Corman fortunately has far more on his mind.

This is instantly established by the opening shot, in which a runaway toddler on a push-bike pedals hell-for-leather for freedom only to find his way blocked by the wheel of Peter Fonda's machine. As his mother sweeps him nervously back into the nest, the duality of the Angels' existence is neatly defined: on the one hand, they are children who need to refute the authority that will always defeat them in the end, while on the other they serve to define that authority by the very fact of their insolent existence. While unable to live within convention, they are equally incapable of surviving without it. And the interesting point here is that none of the Angels looks much under the age of thirty—they give the impression of putting up a desperate, losing battle with age as much as with the subtle decadence of middle-class life.

Not for nothing is Fonda's henchman called 'Loser'; he has a wife, a house, and a job, yet the whole film is concerned with the effect his death has on the gang. They rob him of each of these encumbrances (in reverse order) as the film unfolds, in an unconscious and pathetic attempt to make him truly one of them again; but the Loser stays lost, killed quite literally by their

affection for him. Representing the gang's heart, mind and voice, their leader (Fonda) insists on a proper burial for their friend, and as the cacophonous forces of law and order roll up he stands alone in the graveyard shovelling earth on the coffin.

To clarify the significance of this ending a glance back to the Poe films is useful. As a generalisation, they deal with an iconoclast who has lost the most precious thing in his life and seeks, with a blazing insanity, to recreate it; in effect, this refusal to accept the passage of time and the necessary deprivations it inflicts on mind and body comes from the instinctive terror of disfigurement and death—a terror which, however natural, has the additional complication of being agnostic and therefore inadmissible. Vincent Price tended to resolve the conflict by going up in flames, preferably with his beloved's animated corpse around him. The fallen Angel, however, is less melodramatic. His relationship with the Loser having discreetly approached the intensity of a love affair, he found the concept of the Loser's death intolerable and was party to his resurrection (when he is taken from the coffin to celebrate his funeral); but whereas Ligeia showed some animation when wishfully revitalised, the Loser's devotee has remained sane and the Loser has consequently remained very dead.

So *Wild Angels* ends on a note of cold equilibrium; the social outcast has accepted neither the abomination of a respectable life nor the futility of its opposite. He waits among the tombstones for the only certainty, and his homage with clods of earth is at the same time a religious and an anti-religious gesture. It's a glumly existentialist compromise, but at least he hasn't been reduced to ashes. And the Loser has taught him something after all—that it's as possible to live with sorrow as to die of it.

The relationship is taken a stage further in *The Trip*, in which Fonda is again the disciple and Bruce Dern (a beautifully controlled performance) is again his mentor. "You must have absolute confidence in me," the older man advises as he prepares the younger for his first encounter

with LSD. Yet despite his reassuring exterior there is a sinister coldness about his eyes and he keeps on leaving Fonda alone to cope with increasingly powerful hallucinations. The self-analysis that he has initiated by placing Fonda on a couch and, as it were, forcing him inwards on himself, thus comes much earlier in the film than it does with *Wild Angels*, and Dern is able to drop out of the picture entirely as Fonda gets to grips with the images in his own mind.

The resurrection theme then develops not so much with Dern (who is seen dead by Fonda but alive by us a few moments later) but with the disciple, whose trip is leading him along two parallel roads which ultimately meet, and one of which features various aspects of his own destruction—by torture in a House of Usher cellar, by ceremonial burning, and by premature burial at the hands of mediocrally hooded figures. Fleeing in terror from these fates, Fonda charges into the outside world and his trip becomes physical as well as mental. As with *Wild Angels*, its resolution (one can discount the strident ending—"LSD is not a toy for the thrill-seeker"—which was specially filmed for British consumption) is found with the choice of detachment from two pressing alternatives, both female.

The resemblance to Fellini's *8½* here is very close, although Fonda directs commercials rather than feature films for a living: the tormented artist finally has to choose between the affectionate wife who wants a divorce and the blonde mistress who seems determined to take him over. He would actually prefer to keep them both (in one scene, dizzy with psychedelia, he makes love indistinguishably to both), but as is made plain during the extraordinary interrogation fantasy he believes himself incapable of retaining either. In that he is physically carried off in triumph at the end by the blonde, one can suppose that he has settled for divorce, but in his dream-world the question still seems left open. Ultimately it's not so important which he chooses—what matters is that the whole course of the film has defined the issues for him and that this definition leaves him in sunlight rather than disconsolate in a graveyard. At least this is a step forward from the predicament of Fonda the motorcyclist who, having firmly ditched the way of life represented by Nancy Sinatra, is left with little more than Hegelian reassurance and the howls of police sirens.

It is said that Corman himself took LSD before making *The Trip*, and certainly one could imagine that a Corman nightmare would involve many of the images in the film. Whether autobiographical or not, it's constructed with a nice line in humour, a dazzling sense of composition, and the customary ear for formalistic dialogue which derives its unmistakable poetry from the total sincerity with which it's spoken. Whether it would encourage the unwary to visit their local drug-peddler rather than their psychiatrist seems both irrelevant and doubtful. However the human mind is tapped it will remain capable of extremes in either direction, and *The Trip* makes no pretension to investigating the limits of these. Instead, the film acts as a kind of expurgation for Corman, in which we are invited to share. "What's the matter with you guys?" snarls a waitress, "Isn't the real world good enough for you?" The unavoidable answer, of course, is that it could be, but it isn't.

PHILIP STRICK

"THE WILD ANGELS": PETER FONDA





THE ACID TEST

A YEAR OR TWO after *Pollyanna* (1960), while Hayley Mills (born 1946) was still in Hollywood playing wholesome parts for Walt Disney, one of those many gossip magazines (its title some forgotten permutation of silver, screen, facts, secrets or romance) advertised its latest edition with a poster declaring 'The Only Virgin in Sin City: How Long Can Hayley Hold Out?', thereby paying homage not only to the *dolce vita* myth that Hollywood has long entertained about itself but to the newer and related myth that prevails on both sides of the Atlantic—that of the emancipated teenage swinger, here viewed as he or she most often is from the standpoint of an exhausted puritanism.

To some extent, the new myth may have had its origins in a desire for greater realism. Despite the 'statutory rape' law in many American states (including California), which makes it a severe criminal offence to have sexual relations with a girl under the age of eighteen, the growing number of high-school

pregnancies and shotgun marriages were by themselves an indication that it was not only—as the fifties' films had suggested—delinquents and junkies who 'went to the bad'; even that going to the bad was no longer inevitably regarded as such a bad thing. The children of those uncomprehending and indulgent parents whom so many of the homiletic fifties' films took to task were now reaping the fruits of their parents' permissiveness. Given the cars and the money that a decade earlier they were invariably depicted as having to steal, they also represented substantial spending power ("We're 52% and We're what makes big business big"). The problem, in commercial terms, was to create an image of the teenager that would gratify his own self-esteem without antagonising his movie-going parents. And the solution was to be found in the old-fashioned formula, the family film. The motorcycle replaced by the surfboard.

William Asher's beach party movies (not in fact so very different from the

films in which Donald O'Connor tap-danced his way through college) represent the most conservative embodiment of the revised myth: nubile high school children—played most often by actors in their mid- or late-twenties—disporting themselves in expensive or sexually provocative hobbies, socially at ease, twisting and necking in their brief bikinis, but knowing as surely as any Doris Day heroine where to draw the line.

While more sophisticated films, aimed at 'adult' parents or liberated children, may explore the adolescent's desire for sexual initiation and convey the very real discomfort of the fumbling moves towards sexual poise, they too bridge the moral gap by drawing on a romantic tradition that is essentially Victorian, showing a fantasy-prone young hero losing, or attempting to lose his virginity to an aggressively experienced and predatory female. This tactical dominance of the female seems less a

ABOVE: DIANE VARSİ IN "WILD IN THE STREETS".

reflection of a matriarchal society than a vestige of the puritan tradition which separated the women from the nice girls and managed by omission to suggest that the transition from nice girl to woman was one that might only be accomplished by marriage. It's a further characteristic of this new and spurious realism not only that the heroine should be denied any depth of feeling equivalent to the anguished and self-conscious emotions of the hero, but that the hero himself should ultimately be treated as a figure of fun, an embodiment of adolescent growing pains as viewed through the adult end of the telescope.

Mike Nichols' *The Graduate* undoubtedly provides the most recent and spectacular example of a film about young people created by older people for the entertainment of most people, its characterisation of the graduate a confused attempt to reconcile adolescence remembered, adolescence observed and commercial acceptability. Its exceptionally witty script, superficially daring bedroom scenes and lush, Lelouch-style surfaces help to obscure its rigidly conservative structure. Like Simon and Garfunkel's emotionally charged songs or like the determinedly topical Californian setting, their function is to camouflage rather than heighten the anomaly of any young man preserving a rather blinkered chastity not just in the precociously erotic environment of an L.A. high school but also in his four successful years at university. (Significantly, Nichols never tries to relate Ben Braddock to people of his own age group other than Elaine, whose purity forms a schematically necessary contrast with her mother's rapacity.) The implausibility of the character is minimised, and with it his capacity to inspire any adult member of the audience with more than the mildest of titillatory moral shocks.

The hero who will appear to denounce the hypocrisy of his parents' generation is carefully selected to appeal in almost every particular to a parental ideal. At a time when press headlines about dropping-out and drug-taking are creating a new, mythological student archetype, *The Graduate* (perhaps it's significant that in this country it can be viewed only by persons over 16) offers the image of an almost model son: hard-working, conservative in dress, conventional in his hobbies and indifferent to the prospect of radical political change (how vigorously, when accosted by his Berkeley landlord, does he deny being 'one of those student agitators'). Attracted only to the girl whom his parents, if not hers, might have selected for him, he suffers the advances of his father's partner's wife with a priggish disapproval that in the same situation might do his father credit. And as if the character of the 22-year-old male virgin were not concession enough (even Mrs. Robinson's moral load is lightened by the fact that he is

over 21), Nichols makes his mock revolution that much safer by having him played by a 30-year-old actor.

Ben's one real act of defiance is to run off with his mistress's daughter after her marriage to his rival has been consecrated, if not consummated. But it is diminished not only by the daughter's emphatically established innocence but by the fact that she is wearing a white wedding dress at the time. The final image of the runaway couple chastely sitting side by side seems like an ironic advertisement for a lasting and conventionally monogamous relationship. For while the surface of Nichols' film belongs to the swinging sixties, the moral attitudes it enshrines are those of an earlier decade.

In contrast, *Out of It* (recently acquired for distribution by United Artists), a first feature made by Paul Williams at the age of 23, seems a genuine attempt to tell it like it is, or



"OUT OF IT".

at any rate like it was. Shot in 41 days on a relatively small budget, it concerns the efforts of Paul Green, a suburban high school boy in his Junior year, to become a part of the cool world in which he only half believes. To some extent, the character (played deadpan by Barry Gordon from *A Thousand Clowns*) is equally a victim of the swinging teenage myth and of the nascent intellectual aspirations that make him critical as well as jealous of the school's two or three integrated swingers. He wishes he could look like them and act as unselfconsciously, yet simultaneously pities them the sterility of their future lives.

Physically homely, he is incessantly betrayed both by his material props and by his cultural mentors. When he does manage to date the cheer-leader Christine, his car gets a puncture on the outward journey and he is forced to call the police to open it for him on the way home after locking the keys inside.

His attempt to enliven his date with Barbara (no doubt in emulation of the European film directors to whom his bedroom wall is something of a shrine) by going swimming in the nude is pure fiasco: while he prances about getting goose-pimples on the moonlit beach, his girl-friend averts her eyes and hugging her clothes tighter about her murmurs "You must be kidding."

When he finally wins the admiration of his peers, it is again as a result of his material props not having their calculated effect. The gum-chewing football hero (brilliantly played by Jon Voight) who has victimised him throughout the film mistakes the joke cigarette lighter that Paul proffers for a 45 revolver and blows his cool in a hilarious monologue, even offering him Christine in exchange for his own life. The rather trivial incident establishes Paul as 'cool' among the high school boys in much the same way that Christine's remark that he is 'deep' sets off a chain reaction amongst the girls. Pleased though he is with his victory, he seems aware that it's rather hollow. When Christine virtually offers herself, he is frightened or confused and chooses instead to embark on a slower moving relationship with Barbara, who will only do it for love. In fact, like Ben Braddock, Paul comes to recognise his desire for sexual initiation as a desire for companionship and to prefer conversation to instant consummation.

Yet though Williams' film has several real merits—not least among them that it attributes adolescent problems to adolescent characters and fairly consistently maintains the dichotomy between mythical and flesh and blood teenagers—it is finally marred a little by its very authenticity, by its unconcealed autobiographical elements, by the fact that the painful but comic experiences of its hero are tempered by the more adult humour and experiences of its director.

Paul is presented as wanting (like Paul Williams at his age) to be a film director; but the pictures on his bedroom wall, of Belmondo, Orson Welles, *Blow-Up*, even a clipping from *SIGHT AND SOUND*, belong to another dream world. The fantasy film that Paul constructs (and Williams' weakness for tinted fantasy sequences modishly detracts from the crisp and unpretentious photography of the main narrative) stars not Monica Vitti but Julie Christie; when he invites Barbara to the movies, he takes her to the beach instead, and when he goes to New York to see *Romeo and Juliet*, he becomes mesmerised by the peregrinations of a fly on Christine's bosom and dozes off without seeing the play. He underlines his copy of Camus, but seems happier with *Fanny Hill* and *The Guide to Sexology*. And though this real gap between suburban conformity and intellectual curiosity gives the film much of its irony, its overstatement also leaves its hero still cast too much in the role

of clown.

If *Out of It* is several shades more realistic than *The Graduate* in suggesting that sexual curiosity is more likely to be awakened in high school than after university, it is none the less conventional in presenting sex as the adolescent's principal preoccupation or hang-up. *Wild in the Streets* (Warner-Pathé) is probably the first commercial film to defer to the newest mythical teenager—the love child who has applied the Gandhian principle of civil disobedience not to political but to hedonistic ends, whose unconcerned experiments with euphoric drugs have produced a sexual emancipation of quite staggering casualness, which has in turn left him free to devote a lot of his energy and curiosity to more general problems: the nature of power and the social structure, the causes of war, the means to peace and equality.

In one sense, Barry Shear's film is at least as much an exploitation product as *The Graduate*. Visually and aurally seductive, with its powerful pop music score and psychedelic lighting, it enfolds a flattering portrait of sun-bronzed youth (glamorous, cool, self-sufficient and persuasive) within a cautionary tale for adults that in fact repeats the warnings of so many fifties' films in stressing the dangers of parental permissiveness, even of the cult of sun-bronzed youth. A film without heroes,

it presents the old (frequently via an anamorphic squeeze) through the eyes of the young, who make no distinction between moral and physical criteria, and ultimately presents the young through the eyes of the old.

Although Max Frost and his group of musicians who take over the government of the United States never entirely shed their aura of glamour—Diane Varsi's decadence remains simultaneously outrageous and enchanting—the children of love are transformed without transition into creatures of hate. (Part of the problem, of course, is that no one has yet had the courage to prophesy what a middle-aged hippie might look like . . .) The emblem of love and nuclear disarmament becomes the symbol of the black clad militia and is emblazoned above the 'groovy camps' for old people over 35 that look like exact replicas of Stalag 17, even of Auschwitz, except that the cyanide has been replaced by LSD. The cult of youth is denounced as being a means to genocide.

Despite a fundamental moral dishonesty (to say nothing of the aphoristic script or the fact that it is shamelessly entertaining), *Wild in the Streets* is the first film both to present the adolescent as essentially post-pubescent, less hung-up about sex than his elders, and to show him unconcernedly taking drugs. Joints of marijuana are passed round among the characters throughout the film; and it is only when it moves from broad social satire into its moralising

'political' phase, and the Senate's water supply is laced with LSD, that there's any suggestion of physically harmful consequences. (Sally Leroy—'vegetarian, mystic, acid head'—seems happy enough on her permanent trip.) It is also the first film to incorporate, however allegorically or elliptically, the student drop-out and the youth power element into the teenage myth.

Just how much *Wild in the Streets* is merely replacing an ageing myth with a trendier one, and how much the myth it fosters in its hysterical way is built on reality, remains to be seen. Either way, if the new myth takes hold, it may mean a revolution in film stereotypes at least as exciting as the revolution envisaged by student militants. An end of films about love, chastity, personal relations. No more girls holding out, giving in, going to the bad, no more monkeys on my back, or Johnny goes to college. Though if the myth becomes too persuasive it may also mean the end of the teenage audience, who will all be at home or on the streets 'doing their thing'. For implicit in the instant hedonism and rejection of past wisdoms is a rejection (not unlike Marinetti's futurist movement) of all ossified or formalised forms of art. Before making a second *Wild in the Streets* Hollywood might consider whether it wants the movie to be replaced by the happening. And also whether it has the power to stop it.

JAN DAWSON

LONDON FESTIVAL

continued from page 34

without Rossellini—they seemed inorganic to the main structure. Here in *Partner* they provide the central focus of the action.

Jacob (Pierre Clémenti), the hero, is an assistant drama teacher in Rome. He sees his existence in ideal terms as an extension of drama into life and vice versa, and his aim is to carry the Theatre of Cruelty to its logical conclusion, which ultimately for him means the Revolution. In reality however he is as timid as a doe, hopelessly hung up about his professor's daughter, but unable, because of external impediments and his own inhibitions, to consummate his intentions. In the process of one of his imaginings (beating up the sundry authority figures and their lackeys who have ejected him from a party) he becomes aware of a presence tracking him. This presence materialises as his double, the *alter ego* of his wish fulfilment, who is capable of seducing Clara and of bringing off the revolutionary dramatic 'happening' which will bring the theatre into the streets. However the happening fails, and with the failure the double loses some of his confidence. He comes more and more to resemble Jacob, while Jacob's own confidence grows progressively as he watches the double, until by the end he is preparing to get rid of him.

Who is this double anyway? In a literal sense it does not matter whether he is a real separate person, as Jacob makes him out to be, or whether he is only a fictitious interlocutor whose personality Jacob takes on as if it were that of a separate being. It is more important what he represents and what the division of labour is between the two personalities. The double has all the obvious qualities in which Jacob feels

himself deficient. He is aggressive—even towards Jacob—self-confident and a natural organiser but, like the non-existent knight of Calvino's *novella*, he has no human base. He is a reality principle without a reality. The human drives, particularly sexual, are all Jacob's. In the seduction scene for example, which, significantly, is staged as pure theatre, the double is successfully aggressive but appears erotically deficient. In a sense, however, Jacob is the only one who could be real, for the double is a product of his own desperation, whose role is to perform the impossible, to achieve something which certainly cannot be done by will power alone. To say that the double is Jacob's revolutionary personality, or that he represents the Revolution, is therefore inexact. There is no Revolution, and the alternation of hope and despair represented by the personalities of the two Jacobs is not a sufficient basis on which to create it. If there is a message to the film it is that everything can and must be transformed by the imagination, but that imagination is not enough to change the world.

But a complex work of art can never be stripped down to a simple message, and *Partner* is nothing if not complex. Above all, one should beware of the philistine tendency to see it simply in psychological terms as a case study in schizophrenia, but any other one-sided interpretation is probably equally fallacious. Around the central theme of art and revolution and the initial figurative notion of a man and his double, Bertolucci has woven a tapestry of ideas and images to whose intricate beauty it is impossible to do justice in a short review. At the very least, by producing a work of art that is irreducible to simple verbal paraphrase, he has offered a palpable proof of the specific character of the film medium.

GEOFFREY NOWELL-SMITH

BOOK REVIEWS

WALT DISNEY, by Richard Schickel. (Weidenfeld and Nicolson, 45s.)

WHATEVER WAY you look at him, Walt Disney was something of a phenomenon. That is the starting point of Richard Schickel's biography; and after 360 pages heavily laced with quotation (Blake, Veblen and Ezra Pound as well as Disney, De Mille and Bosley Crowther), detail, digression, and worried arguments over the American cultural inheritance, that is more or less where he leaves him.

Disney founded an empire, as they say, on a mouse which he couldn't himself draw—or not, at least, in the form in which Mickey's admirers were prepared to recognise him. He was devoted to order, regulation, finicky detail, which perhaps explains why he made his career in the most controllable form of film-making. He played passionately and endlessly with a model railway. The creation which probably made him happiest was not a film but the pleasure dome of Disneyland—because, Mr. Schickel suggests, he could go on tinkering with it and improving on it more or less indefinitely. His company became one of the most stable and successful in Hollywood, less on the basis of the costly feature cartoons than on a combination of shrewd management, merchandising, and the range of Disney enterprises. Politically he was a conservative, and in the 1964 Election a Goldwater supporter. As an employer, he created an atmosphere of extraordinary co-operative enthusiasm in his studio; and then, in the 1940s, fought out a particularly tough and sticky strike. In the heyday of Mickey and Minnie and the Three Little Pigs, he shared with Chaplin the doubtful honour of being the favourite film-maker of an intellectual generation who distrusted, patronised and were bored by the cinema (E. M. Forster, appealingly, was among Mickey's admirers).

Disney may have been briefly beguiled by all this literary genuflection: "It's no more a cartoon than a painting by Whistler is a cartoon!" he snapped at some unwary admirer of *Snow White*. But, basically, he went his solid Middle Western way to creating a brand name: he had invented not, in his countrymen's tradition, the better mousetrap, but the better mouse. As the empire grew, it moved away from the enchanted territory of Mickey and Minnie, scaled the awful heights of *Fantasia*, made real wild animals dance and cavort to the Disney tunes, re-invented Davy Crockett, settled into middle-age with Fred MacMurray ("to whom Disney was devoted as to no other actor since The Mouse") and Mary Poppins. All of which is only surprising, or saddening, if one regards Disney as a genius of another kind, a man capable at once of much more and of something different.

Mr. Schickel's biography was apparently written without co-operation from either the Disney family or the studio. It is factually fascinating but temperamentally churlish and worried, continually seeming to reproach Disney for being the kind of man he actually was. If he hadn't grown up in a tough, hard-up family; if he had kept more intellectual company when he was young; if he had studied art seriously . . . Well, he would have been someone other than Walt Disney, an omission on his part which Mr. Schickel sometimes seems to find it hard to forgive. "In retrospect, the three years in Kansas City seem to have been a last chance for him as an artist," he says severely, elsewhere finding Disney guilty of "an unconscious choice of sides in the decade's great confrontation between philistinism and art." All of which, when theorised about and puzzled over at such length, paradoxically leaves one with slightly warmer feelings towards the book's subject than might otherwise be the case. For Disney was neither flawed artist nor simple philistine. He was America's trusty Uncle Walt. But towards the end of his life, so somebody said, he used to look at his visitors as though staring at "something very small and very ugly at the back of your skull."

PENELOPE HOUSTON

SIGHT, SOUND, & SOCIETY, edited by David Manning White and Richard Averson. (Beacon Press, Boston, \$7.50.)

SUB-TITLED 'Motion Pictures and Television in America', this book, a collection of essays by various hands, was produced in response to a sudden and rather alarming development both here and in America: that is the demand, primarily in higher education, for courses in communications. America and Britain have developed separate and equally valid traditions of teaching about individual media (the film study movement in Britain, the teaching of journalism in the United States and Canada); but growing awareness of the social importance of the mass media and the peculiarly carpet-bag form of the most popularly influential writing on the subject (McLuhan's books) has produced simultaneously a demand for courses which deal with the media primarily in their social context, and an atmosphere in which educational administrators increasingly heed this demand to the exclusion of wiser ones. In this book, which is aimed principally at American teachers and students, the editors have adopted a simple and sensible schema to impose some order on the fearsome complexity of their material.

"It is the premise of this book that we might better understand the inter-relation between mass communication and American democracy if we consider motion pictures and television as a 'total situation' involving the dynamic interplay among audiences and four primary institutions of our society: government, business, education and the arts."

The elements mentioned here dissolve and reform into the five sections making up the book: The Screen and its Audiences (a series of essays by, mostly, sociologists), Media and Messages (essays by critics and practitioners about the way the media achieve their effects), Sight and Sound Communicators (the stresses and influences upon the professionals in films and television), The Controversial Screen (problems of violence, censorship, political influence) and The Expanding Image (the future, particularly in education, of the media). There is an appendix in which the editors discuss literature on film and television and suggest areas of enquiry.

As an introductory text for students confronting, for the first time, the manifold problems (social, political, economic, aesthetic) of the mass media, this book will be extremely useful, although British teachers will need to supplement it by reference to materials drawn from specifically British traditions of debate (most notably the Leavisite and Culture and Society traditions). One's reservations are less about the book itself than about the context it springs from, the pernicious nature of Communications courses in which disparate elements are yoked violently together.

Any course which attempts to examine seriously the world of Fritz Lang's films and the influence of television viewing on adolescents must be suspect. The two questions are best approached by different sensibilities and in different contexts, and it is to be hoped that the former will speedily be recognized as a fit subject for discourse in higher education without having to shelter under the 'respectable' umbrella of the latter. This is not to argue that the student of films should ignore sociological factors; nor to forget (as some sociologists are wont to do) that the student of film *per se* might have interesting things to say about, for example, violence in the cinema and how its presentation might be related to its possible influence on the audience. But the most valid analogies for the study of film remain literature and the plastic arts, with the feature film as 'text' or 'object', and any attempt to circumvent this will ultimately do film study a disservice.

Quite apart from reservations about the educational context of the book, it is pleasant to have within the same covers so many interesting essays on the cinema. In addition to Robert Vas' 'Sorcerers or Apprentices: Some Aspects of the Propaganda Film', reprinted from *SIGHT AND SOUND*, readers of this journal will enjoy being introduced to Clifford Odets' 'The Transient Olympian: the Psychology of the Male Movie Star' and Andrew Sarris' essay on Hollywood and American Underground cinema, 'Illusions and Independents'. They will also welcome reintroduction to Paul Mayersberg's 'Passage to Hollywood', Walter Lassally's 'Communication and the Creative Process' and Philip French's 'Violence in the Cinema', all reprinted from British journals.

COLIN MCARTHUR

FILM ESSAYS, by Sergei M. Eisenstein, translated and edited by Jay Leyda, with an introduction by Grigori Kozintsev. Illustrated. (Dobson 35s.)

AT TIMES Eisenstein could be practically unreadable, either foggily discursive in the way of Soviet criticism or plainly saying less than he was thinking out of loyalty to an order that—in the late Thirties

and Forties—was sometimes less than loyal to his genius. At other times his ability to associate the most disparate sources and notions—Paul Whiteman and Pushkin; Lewis Carroll, Pearl White and Mei Lang Fang—is dazzling. This new collection, selected by Jay Leyda, who is Eisenstein's best and most sympathetic translator, touches both extremes. The final, and perhaps the most fascinating, article is a verbatim report of one of his classes at the Moscow Film School, giving some idea of his unique brilliance as a teacher.—D.R.

A TECHNOLOGICAL HISTORY OF MOTION PICTURES AND TELEVISION, compiled by Raymond Fielding. Illustrated. (University of California Press, \$14.)

THE UNIVERSITY OF CALIFORNIA seems to be giving with one hand by proffering invaluable primary materials for the study of cinema history; but taking away with the other by inadequate presentation. This volume is a series of reprints from the Journal of the American Society of Motion Picture and Television Engineers: historical articles and autobiographical papers dating from 1920 to the present. Among them are the recollections of pioneers like C. F. Jenkins, W. K. L. Dickson, Thomas Armat, Robert Paul, Louis Lumière, Léon Gaumont, H. T. Kalmus, Eugene Lauste. Marvellous documents, but unindexed, and with no editorial guidance to the unprepared reader in the way of evaluation of the comparative accuracy of early historians or the partialities, prejudices and bad memories of reminiscing old-timers.—D.R.

CORRESPONDENCE

The Outlaws

The Editor, SIGHT AND SOUND

SIR,—Stephen Farber misses a basic point about *Bonnie and Clyde* when he says that "Clyde's impotence seems only a gimmick," a failed attempt at psycho-analysis. Clyde's sexual inadequacy is never offered as an explanation of anything. It is a device, the most effective possible, to smash our stock response to the hero-criminal, which is to identify with him as a man in every sense more virile than ourselves. At the beginning, seeing Clyde as he seems to Bonnie, we are ready to slip into this habitual stance; when he turns out to be impotent we are jerked out of an identification which would humiliate us into a more detached sympathy tinged with pity.

Stephen Farber does not seem to notice how ruthless Penn's film is towards the fantasies which we expect a crime film to satisfy (often with an almost inextricable confusion of fantasy and realistic observation). The film is on the side of Bonnie and Clyde against the law, certainly, but it is also on the side of reality against Bonnie and Clyde. When Clyde proudly remarks to someone "We rob banks," or is amazed and hurt that someone should jump him from behind while he is robbing a shop, we see that his innocence is a pure ignorance that other people have needs as important to them as his are to him. Yet the first half of the film continues to lull us into the illusion which Clyde has expressed with such disconcerting naïveté; we are in a half-light where the victim does not quite exist as the killer exists and it is inconceivable that others should do to him what he is doing to them.

Stephen Farber himself is still inside this fantasy when he says that "they kill only in self-defence" (they kill only when people try to stop them robbing banks), and he seems to miss the meaning of his own observation that "only once, for a moment—when Clyde shoots a pursuer in the face—do we feel any horror for what the heroes do to others." The extreme brutality of the last episodes is not simply the mindless revenge of society on two vivid individuals, although this is part of it; it is the violence of reality breaking in on us through a dream.

Yours faithfully,
ANGUS GRAHAM

London, W.11.

SIR,—I am utterly sick of reading the stream of critical abuse which is pitched casually at *The Dirty Dozen*, as if it was a fashion to throw mud at a commercially successful Aldrich. Pitiful references are made to *Attack!* to supposedly highlight the previous freshness and independence of the director's approach to war.

Godard has recently thrown a king-sized raspberry at Aldrich, but since he seems to spend his interview time these days raspberrying at anything which smacks of commercial success it is an easy matter to dismiss his vague references to 'really dirty', etc. However, when Stephen Farber glibly mentions *The Dozen* as a badly confused movie it begins to seem that he is conforming to what would appear

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to be an established historical consensus. Certainly a consensus exists but it is purely contemporary and I am sure it will be subject to extensive and severe revision.

Farber refers to the piety of *From Here to Eternity*, which suggested that the benevolence of the establishment will triumph over nasty individuals: this is exactly the line taken by Aldrich in *Attack!*, where authority is left to deal with Lee Marvin's efforts to hush up the corruption among top brass. If Farber feels that *The Dozen* asks us to applaud the reformation of the murderers, then fair enough—that is his opinion. But what a narrow-minded interpretation it is. The audience has just witnessed the carnage of hundreds of helpless men and women trapped in underground passages—in other words, a mass murder has been committed infinitely more terrible than the crimes that the dozen men were originally imprisoned for, and instead of accusation and justice following (as it did at the opening of the movie when a pitiful specimen of pleading humanity was dropped through a trap-door) Aldrich proceeds to follow a tradition of the 'War Movie' and pointedly acclaims these men as national heroes. What was previously murder has become glory. And war has made it so.

Just as *Cool Hand Luke* showed none of the piety of *From Here to Eternity*, in exactly similar fashion does *The Dirty Dozen* refrain from offering a way out. Twelve murderers are schooled in the business of grand-scale murder and become twelve heroes. Aldrich has, this time, completely execrated war.

Yours faithfully,

THOMAS KNOX

London, S.E.5.

Miles Mander

SIR,—A British film-maker long overdue for rediscovery is Miles Mander. Dead now, he was a writer-director-star at the end of the silent era. Around 1927 he made *The Physician* and *The Fake*, usually writing for himself a dissolute, caddish part that suited his somewhat raffish appearance. He was a film-maker of considerable distinction at a time when so few had a clue what it was all about.

I would urge the NFT to try to rustle up copies of these two films for re-examination. Mander's neglect in these days of revived reputations is something I find inexplicable.

Yours faithfully,

DARREL CATLING

Old Hatfield, Herts.

Comedy of Terrors

SIR,—Peter John Dyer compliments Carlos Clarens for not making any gaffes in his book on horror movies (*SIGHT AND SOUND*, Autumn 1968), and then goes on to make one himself. Surely Basil Rathbone's 'Shakespeare-ranting skinflint' is in *Comedy of Terrors* and not *Tales of Terror*?

Yours faithfully,

JOHN HONEY

Cambridge.

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

PARAMOUNT PICTURES for *Rosemary's Baby*, *Sebastian*.
PARAMOUNT/MEMORIAL for *If . . .*
M-G-M for *The Legend of Lylah Clare*.
M-G-M/BRUCE DAVIDSON-MAGNUM for *Zabriskie Point*.
UNITED ARTISTS for *A Kestrel for a Knave*, *Apach*, *Ten Seconds to Hell*, *Attack!*, *The Big Knife*, *Kiss Me Deadly*, *Vera Cruz*.
WARNER-PATHE for *What Ever Happened to Baby Jane?*, *Finian's Rainbow*, *Wild in the Streets*, *Bullitt*.
WARNER/SEVEN ARTS for *The Wild Bunch*.
COLUMBIA PICTURES for *Interlude*, *The Model Shop*, *Nightfall*.
AVCO EMBASSY for *The Lion in Winter*.
UNIVERSAL PICTURES for *Sweet Charity*.
UNIVERSAL/MEMORIAL for *Charlie Bubbles*.
GALA FILM DISTRIBUTORS for *The Firemen's Ball*.
EAGLE FILMS for *Edipo Re*, *Teorema*.
TIGON for *Witchfinder General*.
CINECENTA for *Les Biches*, *The Wild Angels*.
CINERAMA INTERNATIONAL for *The Killing of Sister George*.
AMANDA/JÖRN DONNER PRODUCTIONS for *Black on White*.
CUPID PRODUCTIONS for *One Plus One*.
OMNIA FILM, MUNICH for *The Immortal Story*.
RED FILM for *Partner*.
PRESSMAN-WILLIAMS ENTERPRISES for *Out of It*.
MARCEAU/COCINOR/GILLES JACOB for *L'Amour Fou*.

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HOLLYWOOD: Axel Madsen	SCANDINAVIA: Ib Monty
ITALY: Giulio Cesare Castello	SPAIN & PORTUGAL: Francisco Aranda
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CASSELL

FILM GUIDE

Films of special interest to SIGHT AND SOUND readers are denoted by one, two, three or four stars.

****BARBARELLA (Paramount)** Jane Fonda's provocative performance combines with Terry Southern's punning script and Claude Renoir's elegant photography to translate the extra-terrestrial adventures of Jean-Claude Forest's innocently promiscuous heroine into a charmingly camp and sexy space odyssey. (John Phillip Law, Anita Pallenberg; director, Roger Vadim. Technicolor, Panavision.) *Reviewed.*

******BICHES, LES (Cinecenta)** Probably Chabrol's most complete, certainly his most stylish, film to date. A subtle, elusive, characteristically witty study of the permutational affairs of one man and two women. (Stéphane Audran, Jacqueline Sassard, Jean-Louis Trintignant. Eastman Colour.) *Reviewed.*

****BLACK ON WHITE (Amanda)** Jörn Donner back home in Finland, with the story of a refrigerator salesman, his wife and a flighty typist. Cool Scandinavian surfaces, striking colour; the best film yet from this intelligent, slightly dejected director, with his feeling for the inevitability of disappointment. (Jörn Donner, Liiasamaila Laaksonen. Eastman Colour.) *Reviewed.*

BLISS OF MRS. BLOSSOM, THE (Paramount) Tasteless comedy triangle involving the inflatable dreams of a brassiere manufacturer and the inflated infidelities of his devoted wife. The vulgarity of the subject matter is outmatched by that of the direction, and perfectly reflected in the undigested miscellany of styles that characterises Assheton Gorton's designs. (Shirley MacLaine, Richard Attenborough, James Booth; director, Joseph McGrath. Technicolor.)

BROTHERHOOD, THE (Paramount) Ponderous tale of fraternal love and self-sacrifice when two brothers are set against each other by conflicting loyalties. Much mumbo-jumbo about the difference between old-style Mafia and new-style Syndicate. (Kirk Douglas, Alex Cord, Luther Adler; director, Martin Ritt. Technicolor.)

****BULLITT (Warner-Pathé)** Straightforward, craftsmanlike thriller, slightly too long for its weight, otherwise given an immense fillip by superb use of San Francisco and Peter Yates' way with a chase. (Steve McQueen, Robert Vaughn, Jacqueline Bisset. Technicolor.) *Reviewed.*

CAROLINE CHERIE (Warner-Pathé) Tedious remake of the only marginally less tedious 1951 film, with France Anglade replacing Martine Carol as the sweet young thing who loses her virtue on the eve of the French revolution, saves herself from The Terror by free distribution of her favours, and survives to savour true romance. (François Guérin, Bernard Blier; director Denys de la Patellière. Eastman Colour, Francscope.)

CHALLENGE IN THE SNOW (Gala) The 1968 Winter Olympic Games at Grenoble, as seen by Claude Lelouch and François Reichenbach; which means not so much a record of the actual events as a hymn to winter sports, composed in the cutting room. Pretty to look at, though. (Eastman Colour.)

*****CHARLIE BUBBLES (Rank)** In his debut as director, Albert Finney steers an impressively untroubled course through the potential minefield of a story about a successful writer's return to his Northern roots. Convincing playing from Finney himself as the writer and from Billie Whitelaw; and Shelagh Delaney's script is sharper than anything in *The White Bus*. (Liza Minnelli, Colin Blakely. Technicolor.)

CORRUPTION (Columbia) Crude and Bluteggsian variation on a classic horror story (crazed surgeon mutilating lady victims to restore his girl-friend's vanished beauty) that produces a physical discomfort closer to nausea than to catharsis. (Peter Cushing, Sue Lloyd; director, Robert Hartford-Davis. Technicolor.)

DANCE OF THE VAMPIRES (M-G-M) Roman Polanski's dishevelled vampire jest, with himself and Jack MacGowran as vampire hunters lost among the gross Transylvanian peasantry. Some pleasing ideas about the ubiquitous vampires, but terribly untidy and heavy in the hand. (Sharon Tate, Alfie Bass. Metrocolor, Panavision.)

DIAMONDS FOR BREAKFAST (Paramount) Another limping comedy about an almost perfect robbery, this one masterminded by a congenial seducer who works with seven lady accomplices (and some dated Cold War humour) to reappropriate the ancestral diamonds. (Marcello Mastroianni, Rita Tushingham; director, Christopher Morahan. Eastman Colour.)

****FACES (Academy)** Cassavetes' uncompromising scrutiny of a disintegrating middle-class marriage and the ritualistic words, gestures and objects that people use to camouflage their loneliness. Al Ruban's discomforting photography creates a kinetic equivalent for the raucous despair faultlessly registered by the semi-professional cast. (John Marley, Gena Rowlands, Lynn Carlin.)

*****FINIAN'S RAINBOW (Warner-Pathé)** Fred Astaire still taps all other chaps to death in a sumptuous version of the 1947 stage musical. Francis Ford Coppola carries over into the big-screen big-time the *joie de vivre* of *You're a Big Boy Now*, and a pleasing touch of native asperity keeps the Irish whimsy at bay. (Petula Clark, Tommy Steele; Technicolor, Panavision.) *Reviewed.*

*****FIREMEN'S BALL, THE (Gala)** Milos Forman's cruelly funny account of a provincial firemen's ball in which everything goes wrong. Packed with tiny insights into human frailty, at once fascinating and oddly disturbing. (Josef Sebanek, Jan Vostreil, Josef Kolb. Eastman Colour.) *Reviewed.*

FLEA IN HER EAR, A (Fox) Sad effort to open up Feydeau's geometric farce for the cinema by shunting it around Paris. Decorated by Trauner in *art nouveau* mauve; gaspingly acted. All the hotel doors punctually open on all the wrong people, and one scarcely smiles. (Rex Harrison, Rosemary Harris, Louis Jourdan, Rachel Roberts; director, Jacques Charon. DeLuxe Colour, Panavision.)

***FUNNYMAN (Academy)** Young revue actor in San Francisco searching for the elusive something that will make his life more meaningful. Some very funny episodes, including his involvement in insecticide commercials, but altogether rather stretched and self-indulgent. (Peter Bonerz, Sandra Archer; director, John Korty. Part in colour.)

GAULOISES BLEUES, LES (United Artists) First film by Michel Cournot, loud-spoken critic of *Le Nouvel Observateur*. Undiluted Godard plus watery Lelouch equals paralysing boredom and astonishing pretension in symbolic tale of symbolical wickedness of contemporary society. (Annie Girardot, Bruno Cremer, Jean-Pierre Kalfon. Eastman Colour.)

GREAT CATHERINE (Warner-Pathé) Shaw's playlet stretched, padded and otherwise man-handled into feature length with much Russian dancing, lengthy drunken antics from Zero Mostel, and wearing direction by Gordon Flemyng. Jeanne Moreau and Peter O'Toole, as the amorous empress and her very British captain, don't stand a chance. (Akim Tamiroff, Jack Hawkins. Technicolor.)

***HANG 'EM HIGH (United Artists)** Curious, ruthless, often rather effective Western about a man (Clint Eastwood) who survives being hanged for a crime he did not commit and becomes a lawman to hunt down his lynchers. Intelligent if ambiguous debate on the coming of law and justice to the West. (Pat Hingle; director, Ted Post. DeLuxe Colour.)

*****IF . . . (Paramount)** A heartfelt, accurate, often very funny hatchet job on the Public School—even if the fantasy gets a little out of hand at times, and the revolutionary message is a trifle ambiguous. (Malcolm McDowell, Richard Warwick; director, Lindsay Anderson. Eastman Colour.) *Reviewed.*

*****LION IN WINTER, THE (Avco Embassy)** Screen version of James Goldman's play about the home life of the quarrelsome Plantagenets. Concentrated direction by Anthony Harvey, with some riveting moments; bitingly well acted. (Peter O'Toole, Katharine Hepburn, Anthony Hopkins. Eastman Colour, Panavision.) *Reviewed.*

OLIVER! (Columbia) Despite John Box's attractive sets, the assiduous jollity of Carol Reed's film of the Bart musical palls as swiftly as Onna White's repetitive choreography and Ron Moody's determinedly winning Fagin, while the soundtrack characteristically mistakes volume for vitality. (Shani Wallis, Oliver Reed. Technicolor, Panavision 70.)

PEOPLE MEET (Gala) Danish style *La Ronde*, with assorted characters meeting, jumping in and out of bed for brief encounters, and roaming the world in search of true romance. All very *lumpen*, unfortunately. (Harriet Andersson, Erik Wersdörff; director, Henning Carlsen.)

****RACHEL, RACHEL (Warner-Pathé)** Paul Newman's accomplished and compassionate first film about the painful attempts of a small-town spinster schoolteacher to transcend her narrow environment. Joanne Woodward, convincing in the title role, receives fine support from—among others—Estelle Parsons. (James Olson. Technicolor.)

****ROSEMARY'S BABY (Paramount)** Polanski's adaptation of the ingenious, alarming novel by Ira Levin about witchcraft in a New York apartment block. Gripping manipulation of the machinery of fear and involvement, including some Hitchcock-orientated details of devilment. (Mia Farrow, John Cassavetes, Ruth Gordon. Technicolor.) *Reviewed.*

SPLIT, THE (M-G-M) A miscegenated *Rififi* (perpetrators of a perfect crime destroyed by mutual mistrust). Gratuitously brutal, essentially amoral; and imperceptibly directed by Gordon Flemyng. (Jim Brown, Diahann Carroll, Ernest Borgnine. Metrocolor, Panavision.)

***STAR! (Fox)** Quintessential Clapham to Broadway biography, leaving no starry myth unturned and no showbiz cliché unrespected. Super-confident production, nostalgic songs; likely to lead to ineradicable future confusion between the legends of Gertrude Lawrence and Julie Andrews. (Daniel Massey, Richard Crenna; director, Robert Wise. DeLuxe Colour, Todd-AO.)

THOMAS CROWN AFFAIR, THE (United Artists) Steve McQueen as a brilliantly successful tycoon who becomes a criminal mastermind. A promising tale ruined when Norman Jewison and cameraman Haskell Wexler (both of *In the Heat of the Night*) lurch it up with Lelouch romanticism and silly split-screenery. (Faye Dunaway, Paul Burke. DeLuxe Colour.)

TWISTED NERVE (British Lion) Roy Boulting pairs Hayley Mills and Hywel Bennett again in an offensive story about a mother-fixed, schizophrenic half-wit who takes a pair of scissors to his stepfather and an axe to his landlady. Crude shock effects matched by meretricious dialogue. Obviously meant to be Hitchcockian; it isn't. (Billie Whitelaw, Frank Finlay, Barry Foster. Eastman Colour.)

***VIOLENT FOUR, THE (Paramount)** Semi-documentary reconstruction of a bank raid in Milan. Achieves something of the economy of the best Hollywood gangster movies in brilliantly shot street scenes; less interesting when it gets bogged down with the hunt for the criminals. (Gian Maria Volonté, Tomas Milian, Ray Lovelock; director, Carlo Lizzani. Technicolor, Techniscope.)

***WHO SAW HIM DIE? (Cinecenta)** A Swedish schoolmaster on the brink of madness as his ideals crumble before the merciless taunts of a hostile class. A bit sombre in its approach, but held together by a sustained, tortured performance from Per Oscarsson. (Kerstin Tidelius, Ann-Marie Gyllenspetz; director, Jan Troell.)

****WILD IN THE STREETS (Warner-Pathé)** TV director Barry Shear turns Robert Thom's plausible fantasy about a pop idol who gets the voting age lowered and becomes President of the United States into a witty, dynamic, though ultimately conventional film. The youth cult and "image" politics take some hard knocks on the way, and Shelley Winters is memorable as the archetypal American Mother. (Christopher Jones, Diane Varsi. Perfect Colour.)

*****WITCHCRAFT THROUGH THE AGES (Anthony Balch)** Revival with commentary by William Burroughs (good) and music by André Humair (bad) of Benjamin Christensen's extraordinary compendium of the principles, practices and penalties of witchcraft. Made in 1921 (with a strong dash of humour), its superb visual quality still astonishes. (Tora Teje, Clara Pontoppidan.)

ONE THING I HATE ABOUT SIGHT AND SOUND

is that they need copy before our next season is buttoned up.

Still, here's a few extracts from the draft of the new brochure . . .

You could almost count the British visitors to the Pula festival last summer on the fingers of one thumb—though Peter Cowie, editor of the invaluable International Film Guide, showed his usual flair for being in the right place at the right moment. Pula introduces the pick of the year's Yugoslav feature film output—and what a pick!

We introduce three from Pula this season, none of which have yet been acquired by British distributors: the new Makavejev, **Innocence Unprotected** (page 00), and two by directors unknown in this country—Djordje Kadijevic, **The Trek** (page 00) and Mica Popovic, **The Tough Ones** (page 00). We hope we may have more from Pula in future seasons—but meanwhile do grab this chance to see these extraordinary productions. Book as early as you can—we expect to sell out the moment the reviews appear.

* * *

Other new films this season are **One Step Away**, a sardonic study by David Neuman and Ed Pincus of the life of a family of hippies, Tanya Ballantyne's **The Things I Cannot Change**, first shown at Oberhausen last spring (page 00) and a selection of the best work from the recent Cambridge Animation Festival (page 00).

As usual we repeat films which sold out but are still not set for any public London opening—**Weekend** (page 00), **Face to Face** (page 00), **Scorpio Rising** and **Relativity** (page 00) and **Baron Munchhausen** (page 00). We're also offering evening screenings of some films which we've only shown so far in all-night programmes—**Pilots in Pyjamas** (page 00), **Troublemakers** (page 00), and two Sunday afternoon performances of Andy Warhol's complete, twin-screen **The Chelsea Girls**. We've also brought back three of the most controversial films from past seasons—Borowczyk's **The Theatre of Mr. and Mrs. Kabal** (page 00) and Robert Kramer's **The Edge** and **In the Country** (page 00).

No all-night shows this season, as the construction work going on at the National Film Theatre makes it impossible. We hope there'll be more next season.

* * *

Censored—And Why, John Trevelyan's illustrated talk to an audience of 2,400 at the Royal Festival Hall, was the Club's biggest happening to date. Now we're planning to demonstrate the argument against the work

of the British Board of Film Censors with a number of major films which the Board have refused. The first Forbidden Festival, in fact. Robbe-Grillet's **Trans-Europe Express** has already been confirmed. More details soon.

* * *

The New Cinema Club has spread to the provinces. Already there's one in Oxford and another in Bournemouth, and there are plans for more in Brighton, Liverpool and elsewhere. These are all individual ventures by people on the spot, often based on our own programmes. Although there are no affiliation ties nor any kind of administrative link, we're delighted at this new development and wish them well. Oxford was apparently well on the way to a four figure membership before its first programme.

* * *

Congratulations to the London Film Festival on another sell-out. Ever since *The Times* called the New Cinema Club "a continuous London Film Festival" we've been asked what kind of relationship we enjoy (with the Festival, that is, not *The Times* . . .).

Obviously our paths often cross. We've presented several films previously shown at the Festival—**Portrait of Jason**, **The Switchboard Operator**, **Walkover**, **Baron Munchhausen**, **Echoes of Silence**, **The Brig**, **Simon of the Desert** and **Troublemakers**. And we'll try to get anything worthwhile from the latest Festival which wouldn't otherwise be seen again. But luckily, perhaps, there are often sharp differences of opinion, and we have introduced many films which we're told the Festival turned down—**Warrendale**, **Something Different**, **Man Is Not A Bird**, **Goldstein**, **Zero in the Universe**, **In the Town of S.**, **The Edge**, **In the Country**, **The Theatre of Mr. and Mrs. Kabal**, **Face to Face**, **A Love Story**, **Beware Automobile**, **Innocence Unprotected**, **One Step Away**, and **The Things I Cannot Change**.

But our policy differences are wider than our differences in taste. The Festival has become a preview of films the majority of which have been previously acquired for public showing here. We only show films for which no London opening has so far been scheduled.

Derek Hill

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